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Blues scale forms - Learn all 5 positions of the blues scale, and the common extended forms. The basic theory behind a blues scale is also explained in this lesson.

Theory - Modes 101 - Learn how modes are constructed, and how they are used as both a tonal center, and as scales for particular chords.

Major scale forms - 5 basic major scale forms that will let you cover the entire neck of the bass.

Root - 5th bass lines - Add this very fundamental tool to your bass line creation toolbox.

Theory - Pentatonic Scales - Learn the construction of both major and minor pentatonic scales. A reference of all pentatonic scale

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First Fret

One of the biggest questions in any quest for knowledge is, where do I start. While there are many paths you can take in learning to play the bass, there are some basics that will serve as a foundation in your journey.

Tuning the bass

Basic Tuning - This is the first method of tuning that you should learn. Electronic tuners, tuning forks, and tuning the bass with a piano are also covered.

Tuning with harmonics - After learning the most basic method of tuning, the next step is to learn to tune the bass using harmonics.

Drop D Tuning - This is a very common tuning in modern rock. From Tool, to the Deftones, this is one you should know.

Learn the language

Reading music on the electric bass - learn the basics of reading standard notation.

How to read Internet tablature - This lessons gives a detailed description of how to read bass tablature found on the Internet.

Learn the names of the notes on the bass

Learning the neck - Very important, and often neglected. Learn the names of the notes on the neck of the bass!

Octave shapes - Octaves can be used to help learn the names of the notes on the neck of the bass.

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Arpeggios

As a bass player you will not play chords in the same way as a guitar player, but you create bass lines using the notes of the chords.

Basic major and minor arpeggios - These are the first arpeggio shapes to learn.

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Scales

Scale primer - learn the basics of how to read scales charts for bass.

Basic scales - These are 5 basic scale shapes that every bass player should know.

Major scale forms - Here are 5 basic major scale forms that will let you cover the entire neck of the bass.

Blues scale forms. Learn all 5 positions of the blues scale, and the common extended forms. The basic theory behind a blues scale is also explained in this lesson.

For some guitar scale forms that you can apply to the electric bass, check out the scale section at Cyberfret.com

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Music Theory

Free electric bass lessons covering music theory.

Constructing major scales - this is the starting point for understanding all music theory.

Basic Chord Construction - learn the basic theory behind chord construction and how it is applied to the electric bass.

Intervals - the musical measurement of distance and sound.

Natural Minor Scale - Minor scale construction, and the relationship between major and minor. Learn how the theory is applied to the neck of the bass.

Pentatonic Scales - Learn the construction of both major and minor pentatonic scales. A reference of all pentatonic scale forms and functions is included.

Modes 101 - Learn how modes are constructed, and how they are used as both a tonal center, and as scales for particular chords.

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Ear Training

Off campus ear training links

Good Ear - The free, online ear training site. A lot of exercises help You to develop good ears.

Big Ears - Online interval ear training

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Techniques

Fundamental electric bass techniques

Hammer-ons and pull-offs - Also known as slurs.

Slides - Another bass guitar technique used to ornament a note, or to transition between notes.

Natural Harmonics - Produce "bell like" tones on the bass.

Off campus resources

For more information about guitar techniques that my be able to be applied to the electric bass, check out the Cyberfret.com techniques section.

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Bass Line Creation

The root - It all begins with a single note, the root of a chord. When learning to create bass lines, your journey must start here.

Chromatic approaches - Here is an easy way to add some spice to those root bound bass parts.

Root - 5th bass lines - If the root is the most common note used to create a bass line, then the 5th of the chord might be considered the next most common. Add this very fundemental tool to your bass line creation toolbox.

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Reading Music

How to read Internet tablature - This lessons gives a detailed description of how to read bass tablature found on the Internet.

Reading standard notation - This is an online method for learning the fundamentals of reading standard notation for the electric bass.

Standard notation primer
Notes on the open strings
Notes on the 4th string
Notes on the 3rd string
Notes on the 2nd string
Notes on the 1st string

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Jam Zone

Practicing your bass with different drum beats is a great way to help you develop your time.

Drum Beats

Metronome

Pick a speed

Just think of a metronome as a really boring drummer that has really good time. If you can play with this drummer, then there is no way that will play with any other.

Light Rock

Pick a speed

Jazz Swing

Pick a speed

Funky Fusion

Pick a speed

Reggae

Pick a speed

Blues Shuffle

Pick a speed

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Grooves & Moves

Roger Waters - Get some money and learn this classic Pink Floyd bass groove in 7/4 time.

Michael Anthony - Run with the devil with this bass groove from Van Halen's bassist. Being a bass player isn't all about playing flashy lines.

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Classic Internet Bass Lessons - travel to those carefree days of the early Internet (way back in 1993). Learn bass the way our net ancestors did. No video, to sound, but some great lessons.

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Search over 28,000 tabs at TheTabWorld.com

Search by Song Name	Search by Band or Artist Name
song name	artist name
Search	Search

Browse Bands & Artists By Letter

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z	Å	Ä	Ö	0-9

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Music X Tabs - our ultimate source for tabs, with over 40,000 guitar, bass and drum tabs. Updated daily.

TheTabWorld.com - Over 28,000 guitar, bass & drum tabs + loads of other stuff.

TabHeaven.com - Your Tablature Heaven

Music Gear Review Top 100 Bass Tab Sites

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Riff-Raff - Index to 1000s of free guitar, bass and drum tabulatures.

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Scales

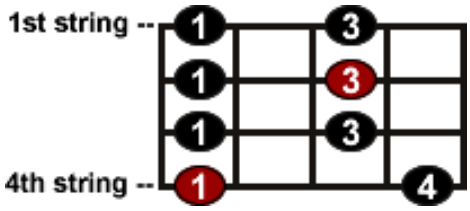
The Blues Scale

There is not a "heavy metal" scale. Not a "country" scale. But there is a blues scale. And this blues scale is not just used in blues music. But it will definitely add a bluesy sound to what ever style you plug it into.

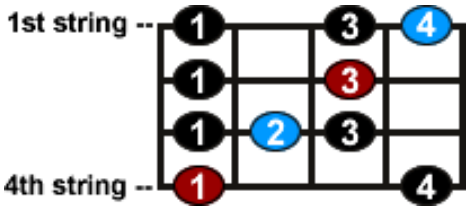
A blues scale is nothing more than a minor pentatonic scale with an added note. That added note is sometimes referred to as the "blue note". That particular note creates a certain amount of tension that is a common sound in the blues.

Below is a basic minor pentatonic scale form, and then that same form with the addition of the "blue note".....appropriately colored...blue.

Basic minor pentatonic



Basic blues



1 = Numbers show the suggested fingering
= Scale root
= Added blue note

The blues scale only consists of 6 different note names. But when playing a blues scale on the electric bass you are going to play more than just 6 notes. You are going to play all of the possible places for those 6 notes within one position.

A C blues scale consists of the notes **C** **E♭** **F** **G♭** **G** and **B♭**. Below are the names of all of the note in a basic C blues scale form.

```
|--E♭-|-----|--F--|-G♭--| -1st string
|--B♭-|-----|--C--|-----|
|--F--|-G♭--|--G--|-----|
|--C--|-----|-----|-E♭--| -4th string
   |
  8th fret
```

So you see that there are only 6 different note names. Once you reach the 6th note, you will start back with the C note again.

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st string
|--6--|-----|--1--|-----|
|--3--|--4--|--5--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--2--| -4th string
   |
  8th fret
```

So keep in mind as you play the other blues scale forms found in this lesson, they will not neatly start and end on the root of the scale. They are just forms that cover all of the note possibilities in an entire position.

Page 2, the blues scale formula

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Scales

The Blues Scale

The blues scale formula

A scale formula shows how the notes relate to a major scale with the same root. The major scale is the constant to which you compare all other scales. The formula for a major scale is just **1 2 3 4 5 6 7**. There are only 7 different notes in a major scale. The numbers in a scale formula are sometimes referred to as the scale functions. That just means that each note in a scale has a certain sound or role in relationship to the root of the scale. So a D note functions as the 2 in a C major scale.

```
C D E F G A B C - C major scale
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 - scale functions
```

Therefore if any note in a particular scale is different than the major scale with the same root, you will show how it is altered by a ♯(sharp) or a ♭ (flat) symbol.

So the scale formula for a blues scale is **1 ♭3 4 ♭5 5 ♭7**. In a C blues scale there is an **E♭**, and in a C major scale there is an **E**. So you call the **E♭** a **♭3** since is is a half step lower than the 3rd note in a C major scale.

```
C E♭ F G♭ G B♭ C - C blues scale
1 ♭3 4 ♭5 5 ♭7 1 - scale functions
```

Here is the scale formula applied to the basic blues scale form. Understanding the function of each note helps you to train your ear to know what a particular note will sound like, before you play it.

```
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--| -1st string
|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--| -4th string
   |
  8th fret
```

Page 1, Blues scale basics

Page 3, 5 position of an A blues scale

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Scales

The Blues Scale

5 positions of an A blues scale

You should think of these as 5 pieces of a puzzle. The notes to the right in one form, will be the same as the notes to the left in the next highest form. You can see this in the 2 forms listed below.

```
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|   |-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|   |-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|   |--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|   |--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|
          |                           |
        3rd fret                    5th fret
```

Here you can see the 2 forms from above combined together.

```
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5-
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|----
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|----
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3-
          |           |
        3rd fret    5th fret
```

Here are the 5 positions of an A blues scale. The basic form that you have already learned is the 2nd one listed here. Each scale form is listed in 2 different ways. To the left you will see the how the scale formula is applied to the scale form, and to the right you will see a suggested fingering. The names that I have given for each of these scales are note universal. They only reflect the order that I am introducing them in this lesson.

These forms should be transposed to other keys as well as A. In order to do this, you will need to know where the roots are in each scale form. You will also need to study the relationship of the adjacent scale forms. See how they fit together.

Blues scale form 1

Scale functions

```
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
          |
        3rd fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
          |
        3rd fret
```

Blues scale form 2

Scale functions

```
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|
   |
  5th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|
   |
  5th fret
```

Blues scale form 3

Scale functions

```
|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
          |
        8th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
          |
        8th fret
```

[Click here for more fingering possibilities of form 3]

Blues scale form 4

Scale functions

```
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
          |
        10th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|--1--|-----|-----|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|
          |
        10th fret
```

Blues scale form 5

Scale functions

```
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|
|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|
          |
       12th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|
|--1--|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|
          |
       12th fret
```

Blues scale form 1 an octave higher

After form 5, the next higher position is form 1 again only starting an octave higher at the 15th fret.

Scale functions

```
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
          |
       15th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
          |
       15th fret
```

Click here for a printer friendly version of the 5 positions.

Page 2, The blues scale formula

Page 4, Extended blues scale forms

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Scales

The Blues Scale

Alternate fingerings for blues scale form 3

Because of the way that the notes fall on the neck of the electric bass, there are a few different ways that you can finger blues scale form 3. Which one you use really depends on where you came from, and where you are going. All of them are valid ways to play the scale in different situations.

Here is the way that was listed on the previous page.

```
|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
         |
        8th fret
```

This fingering is common if you are going up in the scale. It is more awkward coming back down.

```
|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|-----|--2--|-----|--4--|-----|
               |
              8th fret
```

This fingering is common coming back down, but more awkward going up.

```
|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--2--|-----|--4--|--4--|
         |
        8th fret
```

Back to the main blues scale lesson

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I am a full time private guitar and bass teacher with around 60-65 per week. This site, and it's sister site **cyberfret.com** are an extension of materials that I have developed over the last 15 years to help my students obtain their musical goals. Below is some information to give you an idea of my background.

Teaching Experience

1/94 to present Colonial Music, Westerville OH
5/92 to 1/94 Martin Music Center, Newark OH
9/89 to 5/92 Private Tutoring, Boston MA
6/86 to 9/89 Martin Music Center, Newark OH
83 to 6/86 Private teaching in home

Education

1989-1992 Berklee College of Music, Boston MA
Bachelor Of Music, Cum Laude
Major in Jazz Composition
Guitar Principle Instrument

1986-1989 Ohio State University
Jazz Studies Major
Guitar Principle Instrument

1979-1986 Private Guitar Instruction, Various Teachers
Rock, Blues, Jazz

1975-1983 Private Guitar Instruction
Classical Guitar Studies

Performance Experience

Various Rock, Blues and Jazz bands

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5 positions of the A blues scale

Scale functions

```
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
         |
       3rd fret
```

```
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|
   |
  5th fret
```

```
|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
         |
       8th fret
```

```
|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|
|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
         |
       10th fret
```

```
|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|-♭3--|
|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|-♭7--|
         |
      12th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
         |
       3rd fret
```

```
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|
   |
  5th fret
```

```
|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
         |
       8th fret
```

```
|--1--|-----|-----|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|
         |
       10th fret
```

```
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|
|--1--|--1--|-----|-----|--4--|
         |
      12th fret
```

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Scales

The Blues Scale

Extended blues scale forms

The best way to think of these extended blues scale forms is as connections between the 5 position forms that you just learned.

A Blues (extended form 1)

scale functions

```
|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|
|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  3rd fret                            9th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  3rd fret                            9th fret
```

Below is a diagram that shows how the individual forms fit into this bigger extended form.

```
|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|
|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|______form 1_____|
            |______form 2_____|
                        |______form 3_____|
```

A Blues (extended form 2)

scale functions

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|
|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|
|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  8th fret                           14th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  8th fret                           14th fret
```

Below is a diagram that shows how the individual forms fit into this bigger extended form.

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|
|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|
|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
|______form 3_____|
            |______form 4_____|
                        |______form 5_____|
```

Click here for a printer friendly version of the extended forms.

Page 3, 5 position of an A blues scale

Page 1, Blues scale basics

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Extended forms of the A blues scale

A Blues (extended form 1)
scale functions

```
|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|
|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  3rd fret                            9th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  3rd fret                            9th fret
```

A Blues (extended form 2)
scale functions

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|
|-----|-----|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|
|-----|-----|-♭7--|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-♭3--|-----|--4--|-♭5--|--5--|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  8th fret                           14th fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|
|-----|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|-----|
|--1--|-----|--1--|--2--|--3--|-----|-----|
   |                                   |
  8th fret                           14th fret
```

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Music Theory

Modes 101

After leaning about major and minor scales, then next piece of the music theory puzzle is to learn about modes. The most common modes are derived from the major scale. In fact, the minor scale itself can be thought of as a mode derived from the major scale. So first we are going review the basics of major and minor scales, then off to the modes.

The Major Scale

AKA Ionian Mode

The notes from C - C (no sharps, no flats) make up a C major scale.

```
C major scale - C D E F G A B C
```

Each note in a major scale is numbered from 1 to 7. This is going to be very important as we dig deeper into modes.

```
C major scale - C D E F G A B C
                1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1
```

Basic C Major Scale Form

Scale functions indicated

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st string
|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th string
         |
       8th fret
```

Page 2, Review of the minor scale

Modes 101 jump zone

Review of the major scale	Major and minor modes
Review of the minor scale	Characteristic notes
Relative modes	Establishing the sound of a mode
Parallel modes	Modes and chord use - scale fingering links
Modes and chord scales	Basic modal scale forms

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Music Theory

Constructing Major Scales

All music theory really begins with an understanding of the major scale. The major scales is used as a constant to with which other elements are compared.

Below is an important tidbit of information before we get started.

All natural notes (A B C D E F G) are a whole step (2 frets) apart, except between E-F and B-C which are a half step (1 fret) apart.

A major scale is nothing more than a series of whole steps and half steps. Writing the natural notes from **C-C** will create a **C major scale**

C D E F G A B C
W W 1/2 W W W 1/2

The easiest way to remember the formula for a major scale is this. There are 2 sets of W W 1/2 separated by a **W**. The W stands for whole step, and the 1/2 stands for half step.

W W 1/2 W W W 1/2

This same pattern can be applied to any set of 8 consecutive notes. For example if the natural notes between G-G were written, F would have to be raised a half step to F sharp in order to create the formula needed to make a major scale.

G A B C D E F♯ G
W W 1/2 W W W 1/2

In the next example the notes from F-F are written. In this case the B would have to be lowered a half step to a B flat in order to conform to the pattern.

F G A B♭ C D E F
W W 1/2 W W W 1/2

As I have mentioned before the major scale is used as a constant to with other elements are compared. For the purpose of comparison, the degrees of the major scale a assigned numbers from 1 to 7. These numbers are the function of the note within the scale.

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Page 2, Things to do

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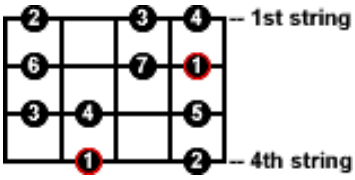
Music Theory

Constructing Major Scales

Things to do

1. Pick any note on any string, preferably within the first 3 or 4 frets. Then play a major scale going up on one string following the pattern of whole steps and half steps for a major scale (W W 1/2 W W W 1/2). The names of the notes are not important for this exercise.
2. Play different major scale fingerings, getting to know the degree names (numbers 1-7). The scale fingering below is a good starting point.



3. Change the following sets of notes to create major scales. Remember that when construction major scales compare two notes at a time to see if they fit the pattern needed. If they do not fit then the second of the two notes must be changed by either raising of lowering it.

note: sharps (#) or flats (b) come before notes in standard notation, but after the letters below.

D E F G A B C D

A B C D E F G A

E F G A B C D E

B C D E F G A B

F# G A B C D E F

Bb C D E F G A B

Eb F G A B C D E **Ab B C D E F G A**

Db E F G A B C D **Gb A B C D E F G**

Answers

Page 1, major scale construction

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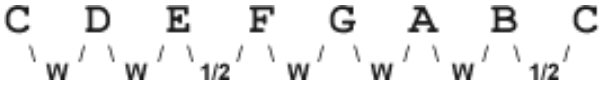
Music Theory

Natural minor scales

Minor scale basics

In the constructing major scales lesson, you learned that a major scale is just a series of whole steps (2 frets) and half steps (1 fret). And if you take the natural notes from C to C, this is a C major scale.

C major scale



If you take those same notes (C D E F G A B) and rearrange them to go from A to A, you create a different pattern of whole steps and half steps. And if you take the natural notes from A to A, this is an A minor scale. Specifically it is called an A natural minor scale. There are a couple of other minor scales (harmonic minor, and melodic minor), but what we are go to take a look at in this lesson is just the plain natural minor scale.

A minor scale

So an A natural minor scale is just the same notes as a C major scale, only a minor scale starts and ends on the 6th degree of the major scale.

```
C D E F G A B C - C major
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6
            A B C D E F G A - A minor
```

One idea that confuses a lot of people at first is the idea that a C major scale, and an A minor scale have exactly the same notes. What makes the difference is how those same notes are used. Those same 7 notes can sound very different depending on the situation.

Listen to the the 2 scales just by themselves.

C major scale

MIDI

get crescendo MIDI player

A minor scale

MIDI

get crescendo MIDI player

Now listen to both scales in relationship to a C chord, and to an Am chord.

C major scale over a C chord

MIDI

get crescendo MIDI player

C major scale over an Am chord

MIDI

get crescendo MIDI player

A minor scale over an Am chord

MIDI

get crescendo MIDI player

A minor scale over a C chord

MIDI

get crescendo MIDI player

Page 2, The natural minor on the neck of the bass guitar

Natural minor scale jump zone

Minor scale basics

Natural minor on the neck of the bass guitar
Major is minor and minor is major
Parallel minor and the minor scale formula

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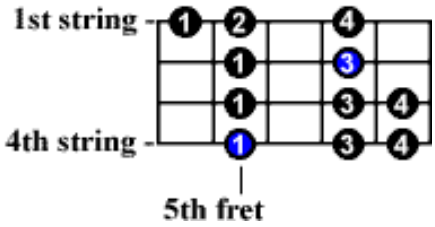
Music Theory

Natural minor scales

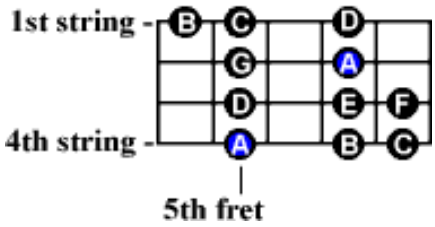
Natural minor on the neck of the bass

Here is a basic fingering for an A minor scale, and right next to that you will see what the notes are in this particular fingering.

A Natural Minor Scale with fingering

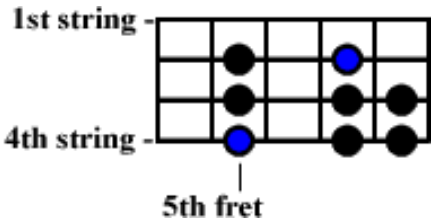


A Natural Minor Scale with note names



On the bass guitar, scales are usually played by playing all of the notes within one position of the neck. Technically an A minor scale would only run from an A to an A note.

One Octave A minor scale lower octave



But a lot of times when playing scales on the electric bass, you will want to play the full range of notes in one position. That means that sometimes you will not be starting and stopping the scale on the root. Though you should know where the roots are in any particular scale fingering.

Page 1, Minor scale basics

Page 3, Major is minor and minor is major

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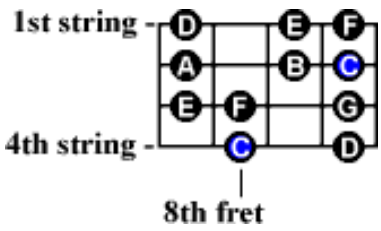
Music Theory

Natural minor scales

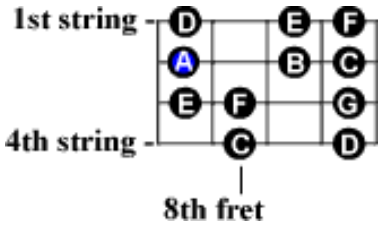
Major is minor, and minor is major

Here is a basic C major scale with the root C indicated in blue. To the right of that you see the same scale fingering, only with A indicated in blue. As you have learned, a C major scale and an A minor scale contain the same notes. That means that a basic C major scale fingering, is in reality also a fingering for an A minor scale, if you are thinking of A as the root of the scale. Though this fingering does not neatly go from A to A, you are playing the full range of the notes in an A minor scale in that position.

C Major Scale

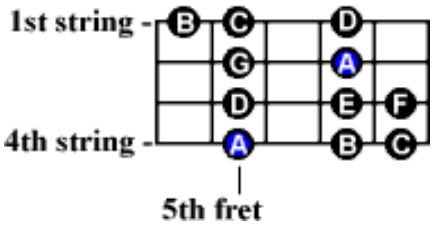


A Minor Scale

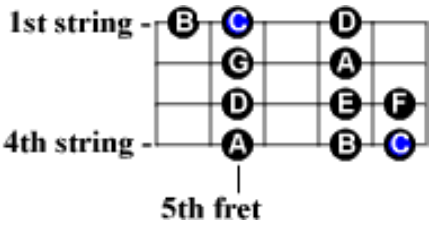


This means that the basic A minor scale fingering, is also another position of a C major scale, if you are thinking of C as that root of the scale instead of A.

A Minor Scale

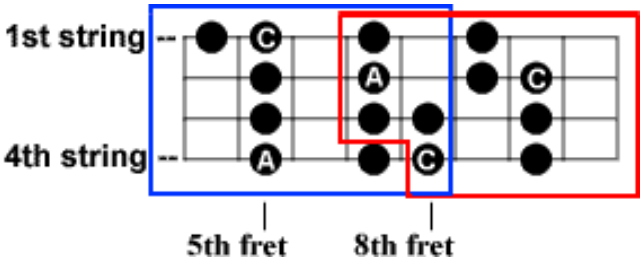


C Major Scale



So you now have a 2 position area of the neck that can either be considered all C major, or all A minor. The trick is to know where all of the A and C notes are. These will be your guides.

Two positions of either A minor or C major



There are a lot ways to play major and minor scales on the neck of the electric bass. The previous scale positions are the most basic, and are the best ones to learn first.

Relative major, relative minor

The relationship between C major and A minor is relative. A is the **relative minor** of C major, and C major is the **relative major** of A minor. Just think...relative...same blood, same notes.

The 3 fret rule

If you are playing a major scale, and want to know what the relative minor scale would be, go down 3 frets from the root of the scale. (down in sound)

If you are playing a minor scale and want to know what the relative major scale would be, go up 3 frets from the root of the scale. (up in sound)

Down 3 frets = relative minor

Up 3 frets = relative major

Page 2, Natural minor on the neck of the guitar

Page 4, Parallel minor and the minor scale formula

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Music Theory

Natural minor scales

Parallel minor

The relationship between C major and C minor is parallel. That means that both scales share the same root. C minor is the **parallel minor** of C major. Comparing a C major and C minor scale is a great way to see what is the same, and what is different between the 2 scales.

All theory boils down to how notes relate to a major scale. The major scale is the constant that is used to compare everything else. Each note in a major scale gets a number. When you look at the comparison of C major and C minor below, you will see that C minor has b3 (flat 3), b6, and b7 in comparison. What that means is that those notes are the equivalent of 1 fret lower on the bass than the notes in the major scale. So there are 4 notes that are the same, and 3 notes that are different.

```
C  D  E  F  G  A  B  C - C major
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  1

C  D  Eb F  G  Ab Bb C - C minor
1  2  b3 4  5  b6 b7 1
```

Natural minor scale formula

These numbers are what is known as the "scale formula". The formula for a natural minor scale is 1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7.

Natural minor formula

1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7

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Music Theory

Modes 101

The Natural Minor Scale

AKA Aeolian Mode

If you take the notes from A to A (no sharps, no flats)....this is an A natural minor scale.

A Natural Minor - A B C D E F G A

So an A minor scale is the 6th "mode" build from a C major scale. This idea is central to understanding modes. The major and the minor scales also have "modal" names. The major scale is also known as the ***Ionian*** mode, and the minor scale is also called the ***Aeolian*** mode. It is just another name for the same scale. But using the "modal name" usually indicates those same notes will be used in a little different way than you might have used them in the context of playing in a major key or minor key.

```
C D E F G A B C - C major (Ionian Mode)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 2 3 4 5 6
          A B C D E F G A - A minor (Aeolian Mode)
```

If you compare A minor, to an A major scale, you can see that A minor has b3 (flat 3), b6, and b7 in comparison. This just means that "b3" is a half step lower than the 3rd note in the major scale.

```
A  B  C# D  E  F# G# A - A Major (Ionian Mode)
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  1


A  B  C  D  E  F  G  A - A Minor (Aeolian Mode)
1  2 b3  4  5 b6 b7  1
```

These numbers make up the formula for the minor scale. The formula for a minor scale is **1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7**. This is key to understanding modes. This is the way that you are going to compare what is the same, and what is different between different modes.

Basic A Minor Scale Form

Scale functions indicated

```
|--2--|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----| -1st string
|-----|-b7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--4--|-----|--5--|-b6--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--| -4th string
         |
        5th fret
```

A Minor Scale

This is the same as the "basic C major scale form" on the previous page. But this time the functions are written to reflect these notes in relationship to A minor.

```
|--4--|-----|--5--|-b6--| -1st string
|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--|
|--5--|-b6--|-----|-b7--|
|-----|-b3--|-----|--4--| -4th string
         |
        8th fret
```

Page 1, Review of the major scale

Page 3, Relative modes

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Modes 101

Relative Modes

There are 7 different notes in a major scale. Therefore you could arrange those 7 notes in 7 different ways. So in addition to Major (Ionian) and Natural Minor (Aeolian), there are 5 other modes.

Here are all of the relative modes derived from a C major scale. Relative means that all of these modes contain the same notes. Those notes are just in a different order, and will be used in different ways in a modal context. The numbers underneath the note names are the degrees of the scale in relationship to the notes in a C major scale (the parent scale of all of these modes).

Relative Modes of C Major

```
C  D  E  F  G  A  B  C - C Ionian Mode (Major)
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  1

   D  E  F  G  A  B  C  D - D Dorian Mode
   2  3  4  5  6  7  1  2

      E  F  G  A  B  C  D  E - E Phrygian Mode
      3  4  5  6  7  1  2  3

         F  G  A  B  C  D  E  F - F Lydian Mode
         4  5  6  7  1  2  3  4

            G  A  B  C  D  E  F  G - G Mixolydian Mode
            5  6  7  1  2  3  4  5

               A  B  C  D  E  F  G  A - A Aeolian Mode (Minor)
               6  7  1  2  3  4  5  6

                  B  C  D  E  F  G  A  B - B Locrian Mode

                  7  1  2  3  4  5  6  7
```

So one of the first things that you want to do is learn what degree of the major scale each mode is built from. Dorian is built from the 2nd degree, Phrygian is built from the 3rd degree, etc.

Page 2, Review of the minor scale

Page 4, Parallel modes

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Modes 101

Parallel Modes

In order to understand what makes each mode different from one another, here is a list of the all of the modes with the root as C. A parallel mode just refers to a different mode with the same root. The numbers under the note names represent how these notes compare to a C major scale. So if you see "b3" this means that the note is a half step lower than the 3rd degree in a C major scale.

Memorize the formula for each mode. This will be very important. Learn the a Dorian modes is **1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7**.

Parallel Modes with a root of C

```
C  D  E  F  G  A  B  C - C Ionian Mode
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  1

C  D  Eb F  G  A  Bb C - C Dorian Mode
1  2  b3 4  5  6  b7 1

C  Db Eb F  G  Ab Bb C - C Phrygian Mode
1  b2 b3 4  5  b6 b7 1

C  D  E  F# G  A  B  C - C Lydian Mode
1  2  3  #4 5  6  7  1

C  D  E  F  G  A  Bb C - C Mixolydian Mode
1  2  3  4  5  6  b7 1

C  D  Eb F  G  Ab Bb C - C Aeolian Mode
1  2  b3 4  5  b6 b7 1

C  Db Eb F  Gb Ab Bb C - C Locrian Mode

1  b2 b3 4  b5 b6 b7 1
```

Page 3, Relative modes

Page 5, Modes and chord scales

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Modes 101

Modes and chord scales

Modes can be used in a couple of different ways. Either as the tonal center for a song or section of a song, or as a scale that can be used over a specific chord.

You can build a chord from each degree of the major scale, and you can build a mode from each degree of the major scale. Therefore each chord will have a corresponding mode associated with it.

Below is a chart the 7 modes and the basic triads and 7th chords associated with them.

Ionian	Dorian	Phrygian	Lydian	Mixolydian	Aeolian	Locrian
C I	Dm IIm	Em IIIm	F IV	G V	Am VIm	Bdim VIIdim
Cmaj7 Imaj7	Dm7 IIm7	Em7 IIIm7	Fmaj7 IVmaj7	G7 V7	Am7 VIm7	Bm7b5 VIIm7b5

Now I know that you are thinking.....if all of these modes contain the same notes, why would I want to think of a different scale for every chord?

Say you have this chord progression that you are going to improvise over.

C Am Dm G

You could look at this chord progression, see that all of the chords come from a C major scale, and just improvise with that scale. That is key area thinking. All of those chords are in one key, so you would just blanket all of them with one scale. The advantage of this type of thinking is that it doesn't require much thought. You can instinctively search for melodies in that scale. The disadvantage is that you are not considering how the notes in the scale sound in relationship to each individual chord.

Another way that you could think about improvising over this chord progression is to think about how the notes in the C major scale relate to the notes of each chord. This is also going to be very important in creating bass lines

Below are the 4 modes for the **C Am Dm G** chord progression.

```
C  D  E  F  G  A  B  C - C Ionian Mode (Major)

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  1
|_____|_____| = C
```

C = C Ionian (Major)
Scale functions indicated

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st string
|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th string
         |
       8th fret
```

* The notes in red are the notes of the chord within the scale form...the arpeggio.

```
A  B  C  D  E  F  G  A - A Aeolian Mode (Minor)

1  2  b3 4  5  b6 b7 1
|_____|_____| = Am
```

Am = A Aeolian
Scale functions indicated

```
|--4--|-----|--5--|-b6--| -1st string
|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--|
|--5--|-b6--|-----|-b7--|
|-----|-b3--|-----|--4--| -4th string
         |
       8th fret
```

```
D  E  F  G  A  B  C  D - D Dorian Mode
1  2 b3  4  5  6 b7  1
|_____|_____| = Dm
```

Dm = D Dorian

Scale functions indicated

```
|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--| -1st string
|--5--|-----|--6--|-b7--|
|--2--|-b3--|-----|--4--|
|-----|-b7--|-----|--1--| -4th string
         |
       8th fret
```

```
G  A  B  C  D  E  F  G - G Mixolydian Mode
1  2  3  4  5  6  b7 1

|_____|_____| = G
```

G = G Mixolydian

Scale functions indicated

```
|--5--|-----|--6--|-b7--| -1st string
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|--6--|-b7--|-----|--1--|
|-----|--4--|-----|--5--| -4th string
         |
       8th fret
```

It definitely takes more work to learn the neck of the bass on this level, but if you take the time to work out these ideas, your improvisations and bass lines will be much stronger. You just need to work on one piece of the puzzle at a time.

Page 4, Parallel modes

Page 6, Major and minor modes

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Music Theory

Modes 101

Major and Minor Modes

The rest of this lesson will focus on how modes are used as key centers. A lot of jazz and rock tunes are based on these modes, rather that traditional major and minor keys.

Modes can be broken down into major type modes, and minor type modes. It depends on what chord is built from the 1st degree of the scale.

C major chord = C E G (1 3 5)....so any mode that has this as the 1st chord, is a major type mode.

C minor chord = C Eb G (1 b3 5).....any mode with this as the 1st chord is a minor type mode.

The Locrian mode does not have a major or minor chord as the 1st chord, therefore it is not used in most modal contexts. It is used as a chord scale, it is just that you will not find a song written in the Locrian mode very often. The chord that is built on the 1st degree of the scale is diminished. And a diminished chord does not make a very stable home base chord. So minus the Locrian mode this gives us 3 major modes, and 3 minor modes.

Major Modes

```
C  D  E  F  G  A  B  C - C Ionian Mode (Major)
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  1

C  D  E  F# G  A  B  C - C Lydian Mode
1  2  3  #4 5  6  7  1

C  D  E  F  G  A  Bb C - C Mixolydian Mode

1  2  3  4  5  6  b7 1
```

Minor Modes

```
C  D  Eb F  G  Ab Bb C - C Aeolian Mode (Natural Minor)
1  2  b3 4  5  b6 b7 1
```

```
C  D  Eb F  G  A  Bb C - C Dorian Mode
1  2  b3 4  5  6  b7 1

C  Db Eb F  G  Ab Bb C - C Phrygian Mode

1  b2 b3 4  5  b6 b7 1
```

Page 5, Modes and chord scales

Page 7, Characteristic notes

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Review of the major scale Review of the minor scale Relative modes Parallel modes Modes and chord scales	**Major and minor modes** Characteristic notes Establishing the sound of a mode Modes and chord use - scale fingering links Basic modal scale forms

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Music Theory

Modes 101

Characteristic notes

Each mode has a note within the scale that makes it different from the other modes in its category (major or minor) This is called the characteristic note. You are going to compare the major modes to the major scale, and the minor modes to the natural minor scale.

Major Mode Characteristic notes

```
Ionian - 4
Lydian - #4
Mixolydian - b7
```

When comparing the Lydian mode to the major scale, it is the #4 that make it unique. When comparing Mixolydian to the major scale, it is the b7 that make it unique. Often if you are using the Ionian mode, you are really working with a major key. But if you were dealing with Ionian in a strict modal context, the characteristic note is 4. The difference between something being in a major key and being in the Ionian mode can be a little fuzzy. This will be looked at in more detail in another lesson. But for now it is really the Lydian and Mixolydian that you want to concern yourself with.

Minor Mode Characteristic notes

```
Aeolian - b6
Dorian - 6
Phrygian - b2
```

When comparing Dorian to the Aeolian mode (natural minor), it the natural 6 that makes it unique. The Phrygian mode has b2 that makes it unique. The characteristic note of the Aeolian mode is b6. Often when you are writing a song in a minor key, you are using a combination of the notes and chords from 2 different scales, the natural minor, and the harmonic minor. Therefore what makes the Aeolian mode different from a song that might be written in a minor key is that it will only use the notes and chords build from the mode. It will not borrow from the harmonic minor scale. This will be looked at in more detail in another lesson.

Page 6, Major and minor modes

Page 8, Establishing the sound of a mode

Modes 101 jump zone

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Music Theory

Modes 101

Establishing the sound of a mode

Writing something in a mode has less to do with chord progressions, than it does with just establishing a color, a mood....a mode.

In order to establish the sound of a mode you will need to.

a) Emphasis the root of the scale, make that note feel like home.
b) Emphasis the characteristic note, this is the note that gives a particular mode it's flavor.
c) Emphasis the 3rd degree of the scale, this will give the mode it's major or minor quality.

Modal harmony is not usually as active as harmony in a standard major or minor key. In the simplest sense you just play a few chord that give the color of that mode. This means the root chord, and the chords that contain the characteristic note. Other chords can be used, but the main thing is not to make your chord progression sound like any other mode. Since all of the relative modes contain the same notes and chords, you need to be very careful about this. If you stray to far from the root chord and the characteristic chord, you may get sucked into the sound of another mode.

Page 7, Characteristic notes

Page 9, Modes and chord use - scale fingering links

Modes 101 jump zone

Review of the major scale	Major and minor modes
Review of the minor scale	Characteristic notes
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Music Theory

Modes 101

Modes and chord use

Here are the basic chords in the key of C major (you will not use diminished chords or dominant 7th chords in a modal context. These chords will drag your ear back into the parent major key and away from the modal sound.

C Dm Em F G Am

So not only are these chords in the Key of C major, but they are the chords used in all of the relative modes of C major. In just depends on how they are used that will determine what mode you are in.

Here are the relative modes of C major with the tonic chord, and the characteristic chords of that mode.

```
C Ionian - a difficult mode to make sound like a mode.
D Dorian - Dm (Em, G)....characteristic note is B(6)
E Phrygian - Em (Dm, F)....characteristic note is F(b2)
F Lydian - F (Em, G)....characteristic note is B(#4)
G Mixolydian - G (F, Dm)....characteristic note is F(b7)
A Aeolian - Am (Dm, F)....characteristic note is F(b6)
```

Here is what those chord would be with all of the modes build from the root of C.

```
C Ionian - a difficult mode to make sound like a mode.
C Dorian - Cm (Dm, F)....characteristic note is A(6)
C Phrygian - Cm (Bbm, Db)....characteristic note is Db(b2)
C Lydian - C (Bm, D)....characteristic note is F#(#4)
C Mixolydian - C (Bb, Gm)....characteristic note is Bb(b7)
C Aeolian - Cm (Fm, Ab)....characteristic note is Ab(b6)
```

In some upcoming lessons we will explore each mode in a little more depth. Keep in mind that depending on your background in music so far, parts of this lesson might note be as clear as you would like. Sometimes you have to have a little understanding of a lot of topics before you can fully understand any of them. So come back to this lesson at a later time. And at that time

you will understand more....and maybe more the next time.

Page 8, Establishing the sound of a mode

Page 10, Basic modal scale forms

Modes 101 jump zone

Review of the major scale	Major and minor modes
Review of the minor scale	Characteristic notes
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Music Theory

Modes 101

Basic modal scale forms

There are a lot of ways to play the different modes. But as a starting point here are the most basic forms of each mode. The root of the scale is indicated in red. Both a suggested fingering version, and a scale function version are given for each.

Ionian

Suggested fingering	Scale functions
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|	|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--2--|-----|--4--|	|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|

Dorian

Suggested fingering	Scale functions
|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|-----|	|--2--|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|-----|	|--6--|-b7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|	|-----|--4--|-----|--5--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--|

Phrygian

Suggested fingering	Scale functions
|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|	|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----|
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|-b7--|-----|--1--|-b2--|
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|--4--|-----|--5--|-b6--|
|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|	|--1--|-b2--|-----|-b3--|

Lydian

Suggested fingering	Scale functions
|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|	|--2--|-----|--3--|-----|
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|--3--|-----|-#4--|--5--|
|-----|--2--|-----|--4--|	|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|

Mixolydian

Suggested fingering	Scale functions
|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--|
|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|	|--6--|-b7--|-----|--1--|
|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|	|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--2--|-----|--4--|	|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|

Aeolian

Suggested fingering	Scale functions
|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|-----|	|--2--|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|-----|	|-----|-b7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|-----|--4--|-----|--5--|-b6--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|	|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--|

Locrian

Suggested fingering	Scale functions
`|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|`	`|-b3--|-----|--4--|-b5--|`
`|--1--|-----|--3--|--4--|`	`|-b7--|-----|--1--|-b2--|`
`|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|`	`|--4--|-b5--|-----|-b6--|`
`|--1--|--2--|-----|--4--|`	`|--1--|-b2--|-----|-b3--|`

Page 9, Modes and chord use

Page 1, Review of the major scale

Modes 101 jump zone

Review of the major scale	Major and minor modes
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Scales

Major Scale Forms

If you have looked at the basic scales lesson, then you already know one form of a major scale. But there are a lot of ways that you can play the notes of a major scale on the bass. In this lesson you are going to learn 5 very common major scale fingerings that together cover the entire neck of the bass.

Major scales only have 7 different notes. So a G major scale consists of the notes G A B C D E and F#. So in all of the scale forms that you are going to learn here, after the 7th note, the note names will just start over again. So after F# you are back to G.

For more information on the theory behind major scales check out the lessons below.

Constructing major scales - this is the starting point for understanding all music theory.

How to think of scale forms on the bass

Technically a G major scale will only go from G to G. That is a one octave major scale. When looking at scales on the electric bass you are going to be a little less strict with the definition. We are going to look at a major scale as all of the possible notes within a position on the neck. That means that the root of the scale (the primary note that the scale is named after) will not always be the first note in the scale form.

For the G major scale form below, you will not only have the notes from G to G, but also include the notes on the 1st string.

```
|--A--|-----|--B--|--C--| -1st string
|--E--|-----|--F#-|--G--|
|--B--|--C--|-----|--D--|
|-----|--G--|-----|--A--| -4th string
         |
        3rd fret
```

In the G major scale form below you do not start on G. In fact there is only one G note in the whole form. So why do we call this a G major scale form? You want to think of this as the notes of a G major scale. Even though you can not neatly play a series of notes starting and ending on G, these are the notes of a G major scale. On the bass you have to think a little more loosely in terms of having to start and end on the root of a particular scale. You just need to understand where the root is within the form.

```
|--B--|--C--|-----|--D--|-----| -1st string
|--F#-|--G--|-----|--A--|-----|
|-----|--D--|-----|--E--|-----|
|-----|--A--|-----|--B--|--C--| -4th string
         |
        5th fret
```

Page 2, Training your ear to hear the root of the scale

Major scale forms for bass jump zone

How to think of scale forms on the bass

Training your ear to hear the root of the scale
Putting together the pieces of the scale puzzle
5 positions of a G major scale
Transposing the scale forms to other keys

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Scales

Fundamental scales for electric bass

Scales are important for a few different reasons

- They build strength and independence in your fingers.
- Playing scales helps to train you ears to recognize some common note combinations.
- They can be used as note choices in bass line construction, improvisation and writing of music.

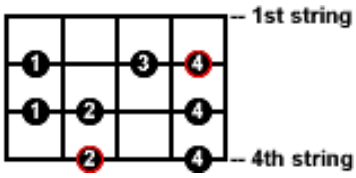
The following five basic scale shapes should be memorized and played daily. They should be played in all positions, but a good place to start is around the 5th fret. Try to use the scales in your playing as soon as possible, writing or improvising bass lines out of them.

The major scale should be one of the first scales that you learn. Besides being a good warm up and technique builder, the major scale will be the starting point for all theory. Play the scale going up and down keeping as steady of a beat as possible.

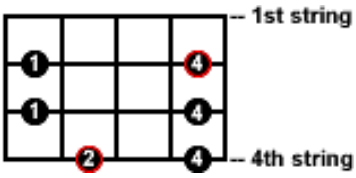
You can also play any one of these scale forms starting on the 3rd string instead of the 4th.

See the scale primer for how to read these scale charts.

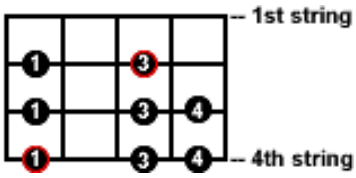
Major



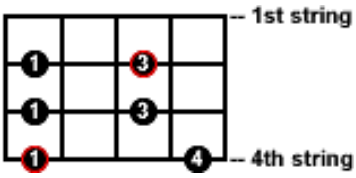
Major Pentatonic



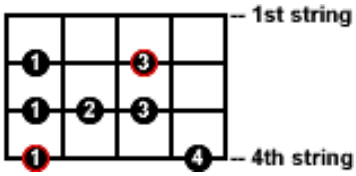
Minor



Minor Pentatonic



Blues



Page 2, Extending the basic scale forms

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Scales

Electric bass scale primer

Scales are important. Not only will they help build strength and independence in your fingers, but they will help train your ears to some common sounds as well. You will use them in bass line construction, improvisation, and song writing.

Pre-scale

Before learning some real scales, here is a good first step. These are just some finger exercises. They are written in tablature form, and the numbers above indicate what fingers your should use.

First just try going up and down using all 4 fingers on the first string

```
 1  2  3  4  4  3  2  1
—5—6—7—8—8—7—6—5—
```

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Then try going up on both the 2nd and 1st string, and then coming back down.

```
1  2  3  4  1  2  3  4  4  3  2  1  4  3  2  1
———————————5—6—7—8—8—7—6—5———————————
–5—6—7—8———————————————————————8—7—6—5—
————————————————————————————————————————
————————————————————————————————————————
```

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Then try going up on all 4 strings, and back down.

```
1  2  3  4  1  2  3  4  1  2  3  4  1  2  3  4
————————————————————————————————5—6—7—8—
————————————————————5—6—7—8————————————————
———————————5—6—7—8————————————————————————
—5—6—7—8——————————————————————————————————

4  3  2  1  4  3  2  1  4  3  2  1  4  3  2  1
–8—7—6—5——————————————————————————————————
———————————8—7—6—5————————————————————————
————————————————————8—7—6—5———————————————
————————————————————————————8—7—6—5—————
```

Page 2, Reading horizontal scale charts

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Reading Music

Reading electric bass tablature found on the Internet

Tablature or Tab for short, is a system of notation for the electric bass, and guitar. This reference will focus on the type of tablature that is found on the Internet. While Internet tablature has many things in common with tabs found in magazines and books, there are many differences as well.

For more information on reading guitar tablature, be sure to check out the guitar version of this lesson at Cyberfret.com.

Lines in tablature

Tablature for a standard 4 string electric bass will consist of 4 lines, one for each string of the bass.

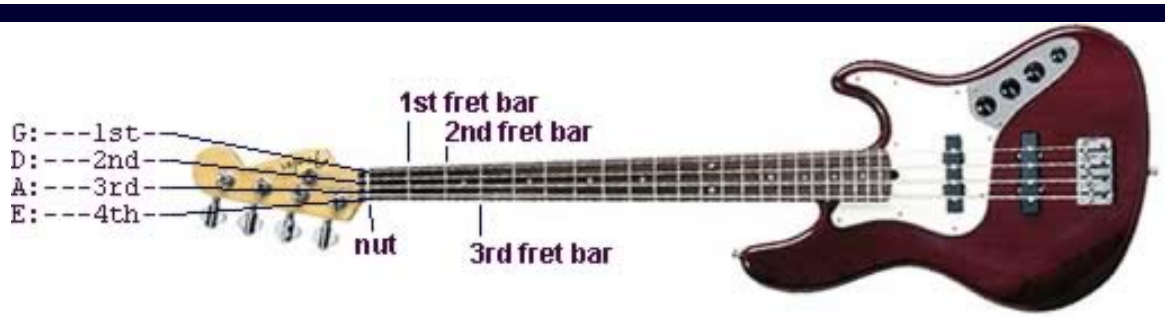
```
G:---------------------------------------- --> 1st string
D:---------------------------------------- --> 2nd string
A:---------------------------------------- --> 3rd string
E:---------------------------------------- --> 4th string
```

Some tablature will have 5 lines if a 5-string bass is being used, or 6 or 7 lines for guitar. But all of the examples in this reference will be for a standard 4 string bass.

The bottom line in tablature will represent the 4th string of the bass. The 4th string is the thickest, lowest sounding, and closest to the ceiling if you are holding the bass in playing position. The top line in tablature will represent the 1st string. This is the thinnest, highest sounding, and closest to the floor.

```
G:-----1st string---- --> thinnest...highest sounding...closest to the floor
D:-----2nd string----
A:-----3rd string----
E:-----4th string---- --> thickest...lowest sounding....closest to the ceiling
```

This is how the electric bass would look if you where holding it in your lap.



Numbers in tablature

The numbers in tablature represents the frets where you will place your left hand fingers.

For example: 3 means the third fret. So you would press down the string just to the left of the 3rd fret bar. (See picture above) A 0 (zero) would mean that you play that string open (not pressing down the string with your left hand).

```
      3rd fret    open string
         |            |
G:-------3------------0---------- -->1st string
D:-------------------------------
A:-------------------------------
E:------------------------------- -->4th string
```

The order that the notes are played

Tablature is read from left to right. If you see something like the example below, just play the notes in the order that you see them.

Here is how you would play the example below

first you play the 3rd string...7th fret
then the 2nd string...5th fret
then 2nd string...7th fret
then 1st string...5th fret
then 2nd string...7th fret

```
G:--------------5-------- -->1st string
D:--------5--7-----7-----
A:-----7-----------------
E:----------------------- -->4th string
```

More that one note played at the same time

When you see 2 or more numbers stacked up on top of each other, you will play the notes at the same time. So in the example below you would play the 1st string...5th fret, and the 2nd string...5th fret at the same time.

```
G:----5----------------- -->1st string
D:----5-----------------
A:-----------------------
E:----------------------- -->4th string
```

What fingers to use

Tablature does not indicate what finger you should use to play each note. You will have to make that decision on your own. But as a general guide, think about this. You have 4 fingers, use one finger per fret in a 4 fret area. So if you have something like the example below, use your 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers.

5th fret---1st finger
6th fret ---2nd finger
7th fret ---3rd finger
8th fret---4th finger

```
G:----5--6--7--8--------- -->1st string
D:-----------------------
A:-----------------------
E:----------------------- -->4th string
```

Keep in mind that this is a very general guideline, and not everything is as clear cut as the above example.

More tablature details ahead

Knowing these basics about tablature will help you get started playing a wealth of songs available on the Internet. But there are some more specific symbols that you need to be aware of when on your bass tablature journey. One thing to keep in mind, is that this system of notation is far from being standardized. I will try to show you the most common symbols used, but the person who wrote a particular piece of tablature sometimes uses their own non standard symbols. They might even use the wrong name for a particular technique, which can be very confusing. Get a recording of what ever song you are working on, and use your ear along with the tab to help.

Page 2, Information about tuning and rhythm in tab

How to read tablature
Jump Zone

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Other symbols used in tab
Hammer-ons
Pull-Offs
Slides
Bends
Reverse bends
Smears
Ghost notes and optional notes
Right Hand Tapping
Rhythm click or Muted string
Vibrato
Natural Harmonics
Other Harmonics
Palm Mute
Slaps and pops

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Reading Music

Reading electric bass tablature found on the Internet

Tuning

One of the first bits of information that you will find in a piece of tablature, is the tuning of the song. You may see something the following:

```
Standard Tuning

Drop D tuning

Drop D down a half step
```

You may also see a list of the names of the open strings.

```
notes low to high - Db Ab Db Gb

notes low to high - C G C F
```

The letters that you see to the far left in tablature indicate the names of the open strings. Below is what the names of the open strings are in standard tuning. This is very important to know, since all other tuning will assume that you know what the names of the open strings are in standard tuning.

```
   Names of the open strings
 ↙
G:-------------- --> 1st string
D:-------------- --> 2nd string
A:-------------- --> 3rd string
E:-------------- --> 4th string
```

Therefore if a song was tuned down a half step (equal to 1 fret), then it would look like this. Eb means E flat.(see below)

```
   Names of the open strings
 ↙
Gb:------------- --> 1st string
Db:------------- --> 2nd string
```

```
Ab:-------------- --> 3rd string
Eb:-------------- --> 4th string
```

In order to fully understand the tuning of a song, you need to understand some basics of how notes work in general. Here are a couple of basic ideas that you need to understand.

Whole step

A whole step is equal to 2 frets on the bass. If you need to tune the bass down a whole step, you will need to understand what note that is in relationship to standard tuning. (see the reference lesson list below)

Half step

A half step is equal to 1 fret on the bass.

#

This is the symbol for a sharp. A sharp is one fret higher (in sound) than a natural note. A natural note is A B C D E F or G. So if you see "F#", this means F sharp, and is one fret higher that F.

b

This is the symbol for a flat. A flat is one fret lower (in sound) than a natural note. So if you see "Gb" this means G flat, and is one fret lower than G. In Internet text tablature, a flat is represented by a lower case B.

Reference Lessons

For information on tuning your bass, check out these lessons.

Basic Tuning - Learn the most basic tuning methods, tune with a piano, electronic tuners, tuning forks, etc...

Tuning with harmonics - The next step in learning to accurately tune your bass.

Drop D Tuning - This tuning is fast becoming the "standard" tuning of the modern rock era.

For information on understanding the basics how notes work, and learning the names of the notes on the neck of the bass, check out this lesson.

Note names - learning the names of the notes on the bass.

Rhythm and Tab

Usually there are no indications of rhythm in Internet tablature. You may see some notes spaced further apart that others, this may or may not be a hint about the rhythm. For any song that you play, you should try and get a recording to help you. Rarely, you may see that someone has divided the song into measures and represented the rhythm by writing the

counting below the tab. Below is an example this.

```
G:-----------|--------------------|------------
D:-----------|---------0--2-----3-|-2----------
A:-----------|--3----3------------|------------
E:--------3--|--------------------|------------
          4     1    2 &  3 (4) &   1
```

Page 1, Basics of reading tablature

Page 3, Other symbols used in tab

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First Fret

Basic tuning for the electric bass

In this lesson we are going to take a look at something that many bass players forget to do, TUNE! After going through this lessons, I would suggest looking at these lessons, Tuning With Harmonics, and Drop D Tuning.

There are several different methods that can be used to tune the bass. The following is the most basic, and should be the first one that you try. With this method, you will be tuning the bass so that it will sound in tune with itself. This is called relative tuning. That just means that your bass will sound good when you play, even though you might not be tuned exactly to pitch.

Tune the 4th string

Even though you could use the following tuning method without first tuning your 4th string, we are going to tune the bass to standard pitch in this lesson. The 4th string is the thickest string, and sounds the lowest. Try to hear if the 4th string on your bass sounds higher or lower than the note you are hearing below. Then try match your bass to the note you are hearing. As you are listening to the 2 notes, try and hear the "crashing" sound that comes from the notes being out of tune. The closer you are to being in tune, the further away the notes will crash.

- *To raise the pitch of a string, turn the tuning pegs that face up counter clockwise. If the tuning pegs face down then turn clockwise. Reverse the direction to lower the pitch. Never turn the tuning pegs unless the note is ringing. Otherwise, you will have no idea how far to turn the tuning peg.*

Low E Tuning Note

MIDI
(1K)
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Tuning Notes Click this button for the tuning notes on all 4 strings. This includes both standard tuning, all strings lowered a 1/2 step, and all strings lowered a whole step.

Page 2, Tuning the rest of the strings

Basic electric bass tuning jump zone

Tuning the 4th string
Tuning the rest of the strings
Tuning with a piano
Electronic tuners
Using a tuning fork

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First Fret

Tuning the electric bass with harmonics

Once you have learned basic tuning, the next step is to use natural harmonics to help you tune. The advantage of this tuning method is that you will hear both notes ringing at the same time while you are turning the tuning pegs. In reality, you will probably use a combination of both methods to get your guitar in tune.

You will need to have a basic understanding of how to read tablature, and how to play natural harmonics for this lesson.

Tuning the 4th string

This method of tuning assumes that your 6th string is in tune. Here are some MIDI tuning notes that you can use to get your 6th string in tune. Unless you have a specific need for another tuning, use the standard pitch.

6th string standard pitch	6th string down a 1/2 step	6th string down a whole step
E	E♭	D

get crescendo MIDI player

Page 2, tuning the rest of the strings

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Techniques

Natural Harmonics

A ***harmonic*** is a "bell like" tone that is produced by lightly touching a string of the bass over some specific fret bars. What we are going to be talking about in this lesson are ***natural harmonics***. These harmonics are produced from the open strings of the bass only. There are other techniques for playing harmonics (artificial harmonics, touch harmonics, tap harmonics) but they will be the subjects of other lessons.

First we are going to take a look at how to play harmonics, and then look a little more in depth look at what they are. For the moment just think of harmonics as notes on the electric bass that have a little different tone that normal notes.

Playing a natural harmonic

Go to the 4th string, and place the tip of any finger above the 12th fret bar. Normally when you play a note at the 12th fret, you are pressing down just to the left of the 12th fret bar. When playing a harmonic, you are going to be very lightly touching the string (not pressing down) over the fret bar, and not to the left. While lightly touching pluck the 4th string.

Right after you play the string, lift your left hand finger off. This will let the harmonic note ring louder, and more clearly. If you were to leave your finger on the string, the harmonic would sound, but would be more muffled. If you lift up your left hand finger too soon, then you will hear the open string. This takes a little practice to get the right timing.

Watch this video on how to play a natural harmonic on the 12th fret of the bass guitar.

RealPlayer Video
(69K)
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Page 2, How harmonics look in tablature and standard notation

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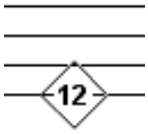
Techniques

Natural Harmonics

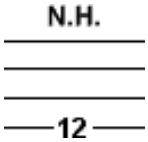
How harmonics look in tablature and standard notation

Notation for bass guitar is far from being standardized. Here are some of the ways that you will see natural harmonics written in both tablature and standard notation.



The diamond around a fret number indicates a harmonic in tablature.

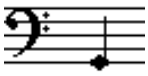
Harm stands for, your guessed it, harmonic.



N.H. stands for natural harmonic.

```
--------
--------
--------
--<12>--
```

In tablature found on the web, the number is surrounded by <> which is the closest thing to a diamond in plain text.



In standard notation the note heads are written as diamonds. The line or space that the note is written on is not the pitch being played. Instead, this is the note that would sound if your where to play the note normally at that fret. Some indication would have to be made as to which string this would be on.

Page 1, introduction to natural harmonics on the bass guitar

Page 3, more on playing natural harmonics on the bass

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Techniques

Natural Harmonics

More places to play natural harmonics on the bass

The most common places to play natural harmonics, are at the 12th fret, 7th fret, and 5th fret. Practice playing the harmonics on all of the strings at these frets. There are more places to play harmonics, and you will be learning them soon enough. But work on getting a good sound on these first.

Tips on getting a better sound when playing natural harmonics

- Try to use as small a part of the tip of your left hand finger as possible.
- Flip to different pickups and see which one sounds the best with harmonics on your particular bass.

How natural harmonics work

OK, now you have a basic understanding of how to play natural harmonics. Now lets take a look at how they are created, and some other places that you can get natural harmonics to ring.

Normally when you play the note at the 12th fret on any string, you are shortening the length of the string that is ringing and getting a higher pitch. The string is only ringing from the fret bar that your are pressing down at, to the bridge. On the other hand, if you are playing the 12th fret harmonic, the string is actually ringing on both sides of where you are touching. The only part of the string that is not ringing is where you were touching the string. The point of the string that is not ringing is called the node. The string is ringing in 2 divided sections.

Page 2, How harmonics look in tablature and standard notation

Page 4, more places to play natural harmonics on the bass

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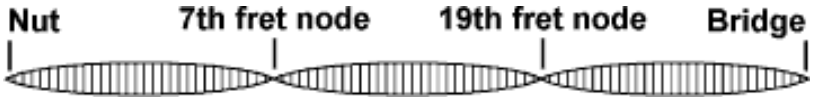
Techniques

Natural Harmonics

Dividing the bass string into 3 equal parts

Now play the harmonic at the 7th fret. What is happening here is that the string is ringing in 3 equal parts. There are 2 nodes, one where you touched the string at the 7th fret, and another at the 19 fret.



If you go to the 19th fret you will notice that the harmonic is exactly the same at the 7th. After you play the harmonic at the 7th fret, try touching the string at the 19th fret. You will notice that nothing happens. This is because the string is not ringing at that point. But if you touch the string in at any point other that the 7th or 19th frets, the string will stop ringing.

Watch this video that shows playing the natural harmonics at the 7th and the 19th frets.

RealPlayer Video
(112K)
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Dividing the bass string into 4 equal parts

Next play the harmonic at the 5th fret. In this case the string is ringing in 4 equal parts. When you played the harmonics at the 7th and 19th frets, you got the same exact harmonic at both of these nodes. In this case, only the 5th fret and the 24th fret will sound exactly the same, and the 12th fret will sound an octave lower. So even though the 12th fret is a node, and is a part of the string that is not ringing, you can not get the same harmonic as the 5th fret to ring there. A little confusing, I know. It all has to do with physics, and I don't want to get to much into that in this lesson.

Note that most bass guitars do not have 24 frets, but the node is where that fret would be.

Physics side note:

If you take any string at the same tension, and make it half the length, you will raise it by one octave. As you keep dividing the string in half, the next octave up is a shorter and shorter distance each time. Playing a harmonic at the 12th fret divides the string in half, so the note that sounds is an octave higher that the open string. Playing a harmonic at the 5th or 24th fret divides the string in half yet again, so the notes sound an octave higher than the 12th fret harmonic, This is also why the frets get closer together as you move toward the bridge. It takes less and less distance to get to the next higher note.

Page 3, how harmonics work

Page 5, Dividing the bass string into 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 parts

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First Fret

Octave shapes on the bass

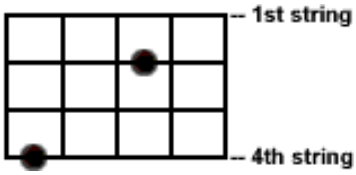
Besides their use for various musical reasons, octaves can be a great help in learning the names of the notes on the neck. If you know the names of the notes on the 4th and 3rd strings, you can find the name of the notes on other strings by using octaves.

If you don't know the names of the notes on the 3rd and 4th strings, have no fear, learn here.

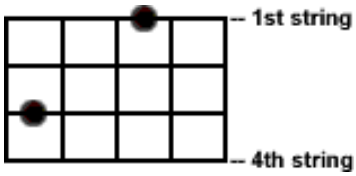
Octa is the Greek word for eight. An **octave** is a note that is 8 steps above, or below a giving note in a major scale.

C major scale

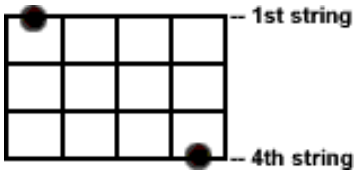
C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8(octave)



Use this shape when finding a note on your 2nd string.



Use this shape when finding a note on your 1st string.



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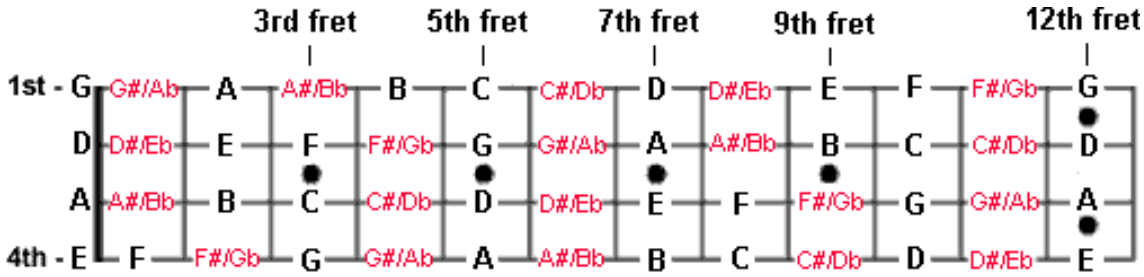
First Fret

Names of the notes on the neck of the electric bass

Note name on the neck

Even though this chart of notes was a pain to make. Don't use it! Move on down the page and learn how to figure out the names of the notes yourself. This chart is just a reference.



The first thing you should do is learn the names of the notes on the 4th and 3rd strings. The notes on these string be will be your anchor in learning to play the bass. That is not to say that the 1st and 2nd string are not important.

The first step is to memorize the following words of wisdom.

All natural notes (A B C D E F G) are a whole step (2 frets) apart, except between E-F and B-C which are a half step (1 fret) apart.

*Although it may seem stupid, make sure you know the 1st 7 letters in the alphabet forwards and backwards. Most people have a little trouble with the backwards part. Once you reach G in the musical alphabet, you start over again with A. (no H's in this universe)

With this information you can find any note on the neck of the guitar, as long as you know the names of the open strings.(**4th=E, 3rd=A, 2nd=D, 1st=G**)

Remember that the 1st string is the thinnest.....highest sounding string, and the 4th is the thickest.....lowest sounding..

Names of the notes on the 4th and 3rd strings

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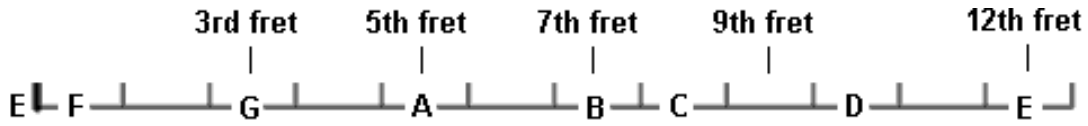
First Fret

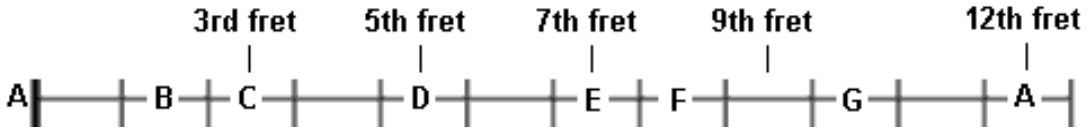
Names of the notes on the neck of the electric bass

Notes on the 4th string



The best way to memorize the natural notes on any string is to start out just playing (and naming) a few notes and progressively add 1 note at a time. (e.g. play E F G E G F G A F A B F G B C etc...) If you do this a little each day, you can learn the notes on the neck quickly. Also notice where the notes are in relation to the fret markers (usually at the frets 3, 5, 7, 9 and 12 also 15, 17, 19, 21). At the 12th fret, the note is the same as the open string only sounds higher, this is called an octave. Beyond the 12th fret the names of the notes just repeat. The higher fret markers are equivalent to the lower ones just and octave higher (15=3, 17=5, 19=7, 21=9)

Notes on the 3rd string



Go through the same process as the 3rd string. After learning the natural notes on the 3rd and 4th string, do the same on the 2nd and 1st.

Sharps and Flats

A sharp (#) raises a natural note by a half step (1 fret).

A flat (b) lowers the natural note by a half step.

So between each set of notes (except between E-F and B-C) there will be a sharp/flat note. (e.g. the note between F and G is F# or Gb, they are the exact same note just with a different name)

Notes that sound the same but have a different name are called **enharmonic**.

Another great way to help yourself learn the names of the notes on the neck is to use octave shapes to find the names of the notes on the less familiar strings.

page 1, names of notes on the neck

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Techniques

Natural Harmonics

Dividing the bass string into 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 parts

The process of dividing the bass string could continue. Here is a video of me playing the harmonic series. Each time the string is divided into more parts, and shorter parts. The shorter the part that is ringing, the more difficult it is to get a harmonic to sound. In fact you will notice that on the last one I play (dividing the string into 10 parts) doesn't have all that strong of a sound.

Here are the frets that I am playing to get this harmonic series. If your see decimals (3.2, 2.7, etc.) this is just an approximation of where you should put your finger. The higher harmonics do not fall right over the fret bars.

I could play other frets to get some of these same harmonics to ring. This is something that we will be taking a look at next. But here you can easily visualize the parts getting shorter as you move your hand towards the nut.

RealPlayer Video
(186K)
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Page 4, Dividing the string into 3 and 4 parts

Page 6, Natural harmonic master list

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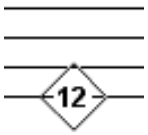
Techniques

Natural Harmonics

Natural Harmonic Master List

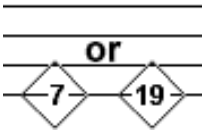
OK, here are all of the natural harmonics on the bass. This does not include the ones that you could play beyond where the bass has frets. It would be very difficult to explain where they are, so you can do your own experimenting.

When learning the names of the notes that are created by playing harmonics, there are two techniques that you could use. One is to relate the pitch to the open string. The other is to relate the pitch to the note that would normally sound if your were to press down and play normally at that fret. Which one you use will depend on the particular harmonic. I will explain both where it is practical and put a * next to the one that I think is easiest to use. You of course will need to know the names of the notes on the neck of the bass. To understand things like Major 3rd, Perfect 5th etc., you will need to understand the some music theory and intervals.



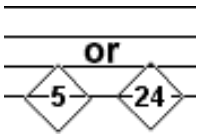
* Sounds the same as the fretted note

* Sound an octave above the open string



* Sounds an octave above the fretted note

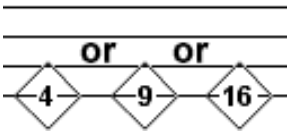
Sounds an octave plus a perfect 5th above the open string



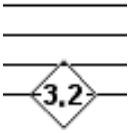
Sounds an octave plus a perfect 5th above the open string

* Sounds 2 octaves above the open string

Sounds 2 octaves plus a Major 3rd above the open string



* Sounds 2 octaves above the fretted note

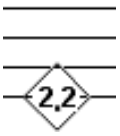


Sounds 2 octaves plus a perfect 5th above the open string

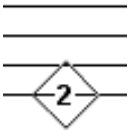
* Sounds and octave higher than the harmonic at the 7th fret.

Sounds 2 octaves, plus a Minor 7th above the open string.

* Sounds 3 octaves, minus a major 2nd above the open string (Just think down a whole step from the open string, and it sounds 3 octaves higher than that.)

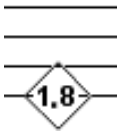


* Sounds 3 octaves higher than the open string



Sounds 3 octaves, plus a Major 2nd above the open string

* Sounds 3 octaves above the fretted note



* Sounds an octave higher than the 4th fret harmonic

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Page 5, The harmonic series video

Page 7, Playing a E minor pentatonic scale with harmonics

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Music Theory

Intervals

Interval basics

An interval in music is a measurement of distance and sound between two different notes. The first thing that you should understand in your interval journey, is what the intervals are in a major scale. Remember that the major scale is a constant in music theory. You will be using it again and again to compare and relate other topics.

C Major scale = C D E F G A B C

Below are all of the intervals from C in a C major scale.

```
C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|_| = Major 2nd (M2)...AKA Whole step
```

```
C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|___| = Major 3rd (M3)
```

```
C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|_____| = Perfect 4th (P4)
```

```
C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|_______| = Perfect 5th (P5)
```

```
C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|_________| = Major 6th (M6)


C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|___________| = Major 7th (M7)


C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|_____________| = Perfect 8th, or Octave (P8)
```

Page 2, playing the intervals of a major scale on the bass

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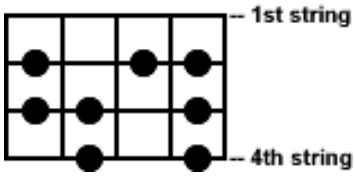
Music Theory

Intervals

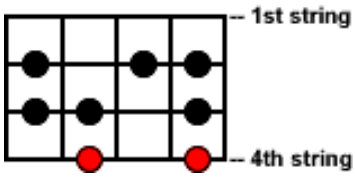
Major scale interval shapes

The scale form to the right is the most common and basic fingering for a major scale. It will be used to help visualize the basic interval shapes.



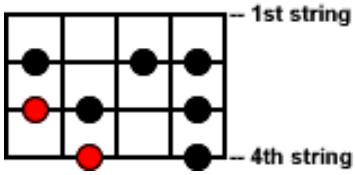
From the 1st degree of the scale to the 2nd is called a major 2nd.

M2



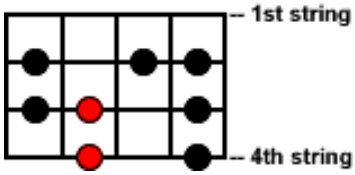
From the 1st degree of the scale to the 3rd is called a major 3rd.

M3



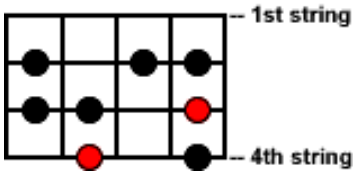
From the 1st degree of the scale to the 4th is called a perfect 4th.

P4



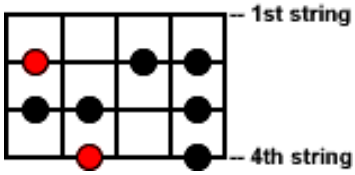
From the 1st degree of the scale to the 5th is called a perfect 5th.

P5



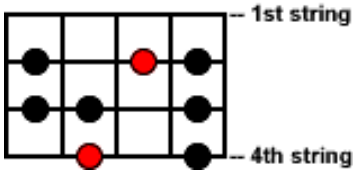
From the 1st degree of the scale to the 6th is called a major 6th

M6



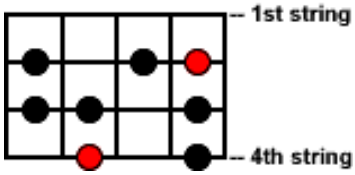
From the 1st degree of the scale to the 7th is called a major 7th

M7



From the 1st degree of the scale to the 8th is called a perfect 8th or and octave.

P8



Page 1, Interval basics

Page 3, Filling in the cracks...the rest of the intervals

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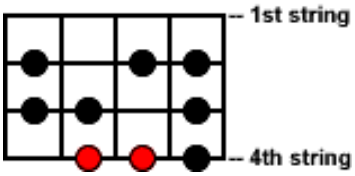
Music Theory

Intervals

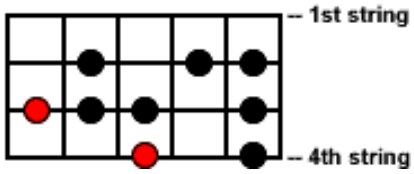
Filling in the cracks...the rest of the intervals

If you take any major interval, and lower the top note by a half step (1 fret) you will have a minor interval.

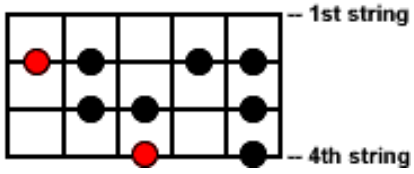
```
C Db D E F G A B C
1 b2 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
|_| = Minor 2nd (m2)
```



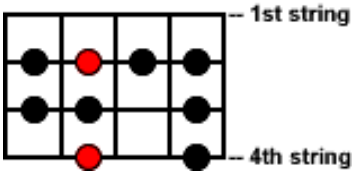

```
C D Eb E F G A B C
1 2 b3 3 4 5 6 7 8
|___| = Minor 3rd (m3)
```




```
C D E F G Ab A B C
1 2 3 4 5 b6 6 7 8
|_________| = Minor 6th (m6)
```




```
C D E F G A Bb B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 b7 7 8
|___________| = Minor 7th (m7)
```

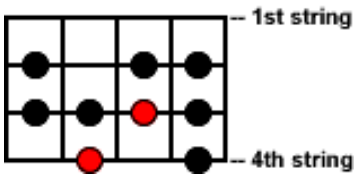


If you take any perfect interval and raise the top note by a half step, then you have augmented interval. If you lower it by a half step, you have a diminished interval. So if you raise the top note of a perfect 4th interval, you have an augmented 4th. If you lower a perfect 5th interval, you have diminished 5th. These are really just 2 ways to spell the same interval. These 2 intervals are ***enharmonic.*** That means that they are spelled different, but sound the same.

There is a generic name for this interval regardless of how it is spelled, it is called a ***tritone***.

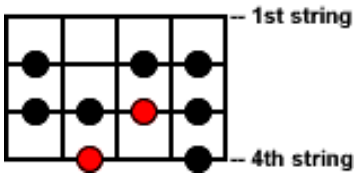
Tritone (tt)

```
C D E F F# G A B C
1 2 3 4 #4 5 6 7 8
|_________| = Augmented 4th (+4)
```



The + stands for augmented.

```
C D E F Gb G A B C
1 2 3 4 b5 5 6 7 8
|_________| = Diminished 5th (o5)
```



The o stands for diminished.

Page 2, playing the intervals of a major scale on the bass

Page 4, Intervals and understanding the fretboard

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Music Theory

Intervals

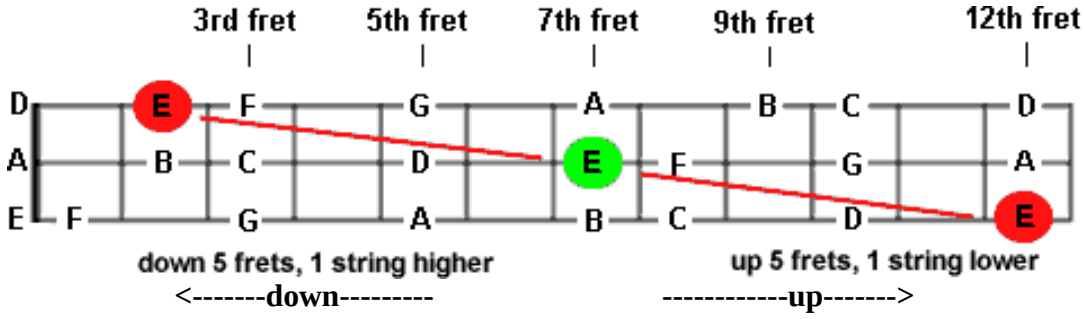
Intervals and understanding the fretboard

Of course just understanding the theory behind intervals is not enough for them to become useful to you. You will need to do some work learning the different places on the neck to play them, and what they sound like. This will open up a whole new world of understanding the neck of the bass.

Before sitting down and just memorizing all of the interval shapes, you should understand how they are derived. On the last couple of pages you learned some basic shapes for these interval, but now it is time to learn the possibilities a little more in-depth.

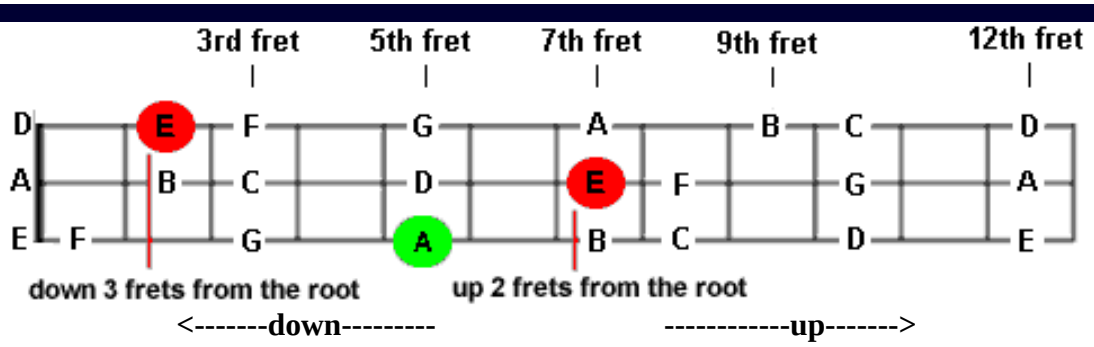
The first step in learning these interval shapes is to understand how the notes on the neck are arranged. (see names of notes on the neck and basic tuning)

Here is an example of how you find the exact same note (not an octave) on different strings. If you want to find another place to play the E on the 3rd string, 7th fret, you need to do the following. Go up 5 frets on the next lower string (4th string) or go down 5 frets on the next string higher (2nd string).



This is the same idea used in tuning your bass. You play the 5th fret on the 4th string (A), to tune your 3rd string open (A)

Here is an example using the perfect 5th interval. Here you are trying to play the interval of a perfect 5th (within normal reaching distance.... about 4 frets) in 2 different places.



From **A** on the 4th string to **E** on the 3rd string is a **perfect 5th**. In order to find a different shape for the exact same interval, you need to do the following. If the top note of the interval (**E**) is to the right of the root, then you need to find the top note on the next highest string (to the left). If the top note of the interval is to the left of the root, then you need to find the top note on the next lowest string (to the right). I know this sounds a little confusing but it is the same idea as above, just counting up or down from the root, instead of counting 5 frets from the highest note in the interval. The magic number here is 5 either way.

If the top note is to the right of the root 2 frets, go to the left of the root 3 frets on the next higher string. (2+3=5)

If the top note is to the left of the root 3 frets, go to the right of the root 2 frets on the next lower string. (3+2=5)

Things to do

Try taking the simple interval shapes that you learned on the previous pages (you did learn them didn't you?) and find another way to play that same interval within a 4 fret area. There should be 2 places to play every interval, except the perfect 4th and the minor 7th. Playing these interval in a different place would require a bigger stretch that 4 frets.

Page 3, Filling in the cracks...the rest of the intervals

Page 5, All interval shapes within a 4 fret area

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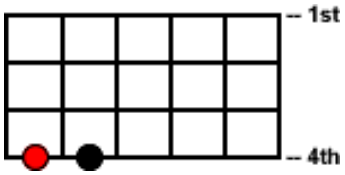
Music Theory

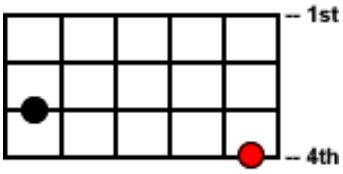
Intervals

All interval shapes within a 4 fret area

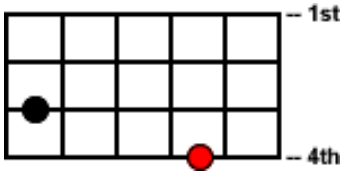
These are the basic interval shapes on the bass guitar within a 4 fret area. You can definitely play interval outside of this range, but concentrate on these first. Each interval shape can be played on any combination of strings.

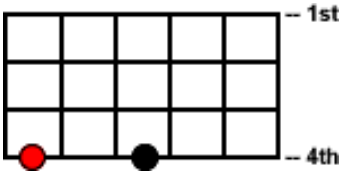
minor 2nd
(1 to b2)



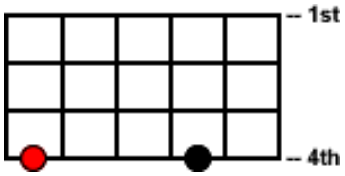


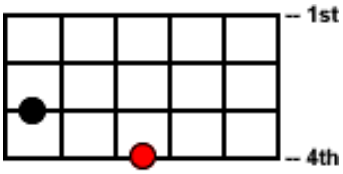
major 2nd
(1 to 2)



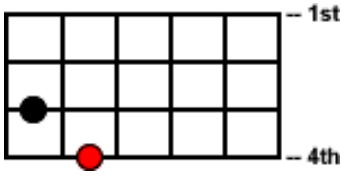


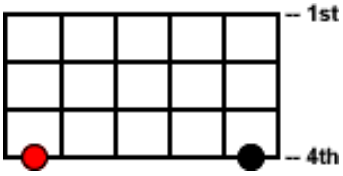
minor 3rd
(1 to b3)



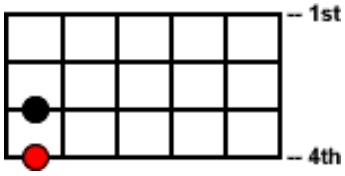


major 3rd
(1 to 3)

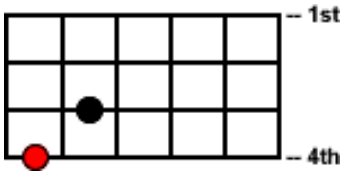


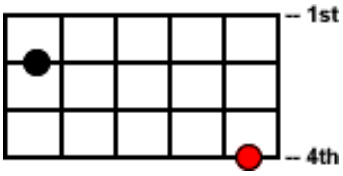


perfect 4th
(1 to 4)

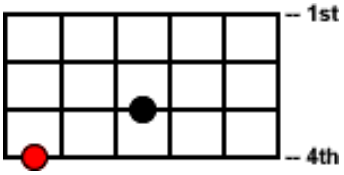


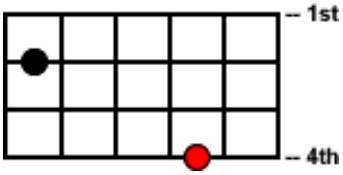
tritone (augmented 4th or diminished 5th)
(1 to #4 or 1 to b5)



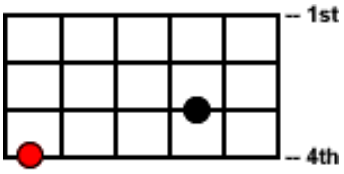


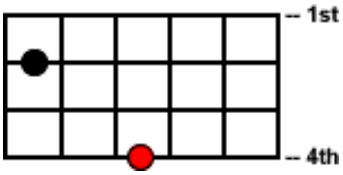
perfect 5th
(1 to 5)



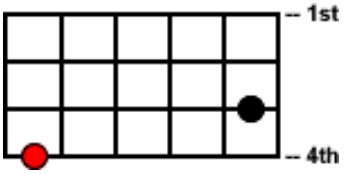


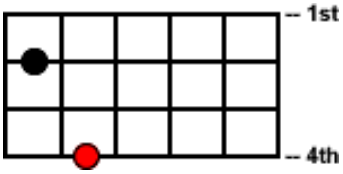
minor 6th
(1 to b6)



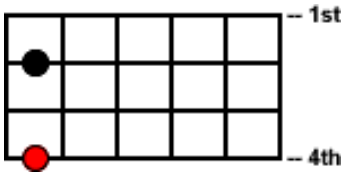


major 6th
(1 to 6)

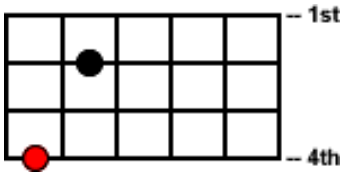


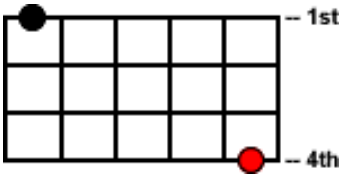


minor 7th
(1 to b7)

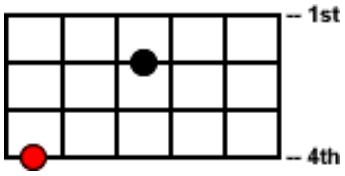


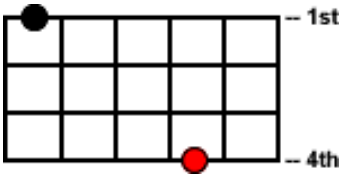
major 7th
(1 to 7)





perfect 8th (or octave)
(1 to 8)





Page 4, Intervals and understanding the fretboard

Page 1, Interval basics

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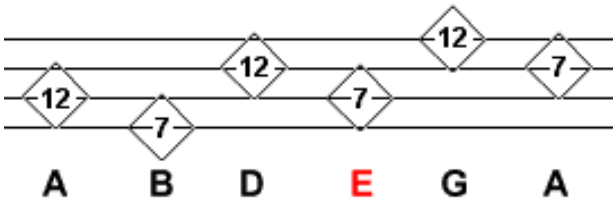
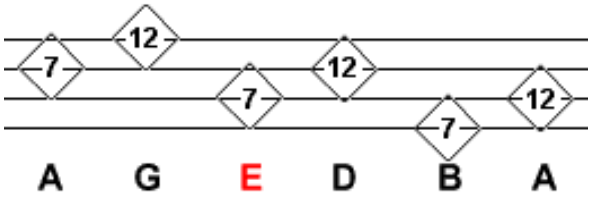
Techniques

Natural Harmonics

E minor pentatonic scale with harmonics

Here is a E minor pentatonic scale using all harmonics. Since all of the note ring together as you play, it kind of sounds like a harp.





Page 6, master list of natural harmonics

Page 1, introduction to natural harmonics on the bass

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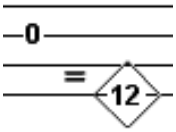
First Fret

Drop D tuning for electric bass

In the modern rock era, Drop D is fast becoming one of the most common tunings for the electric bass. The only difference between Drop D and standard tuning is that you are going to lower (drop) the 4th string from an E down to a D. Everything else will stay the same.

This lesson will assume that you already know how to read tablature, understand basic tuning, understand harmonics, and tuning with harmonics.

Getting into Drop D from standard tuning



Since the only note that is different from standard tuning is the 4th string, here is an easy way to get into Drop D tuning. Play your 2nd string open, which is a D. Then play the 12 fret harmonic on the 4th string (touch the string lightly right above the 12th fret bar). Tune that harmonic note down a whole step so that it sounds like the open 2nd string. When both notes are ringing at the same time, you will then hear them "crash" against each other when they are out of tune. The further those crashes are from each other, the closer you are to being in tune.

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(121K)
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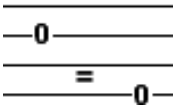

notes are an octave apart

Sometimes bass players will tune the 4th string open to the 2nd string open, understanding that the 4th string will sound an octave lower. Try playing both notes at the same time and listen for the same "crashing" sound that you heard when using the 12th fret harmonic on the 4th string.

RealPlayer Video
(144K)
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Page 2, tuning all of the strings from the 4th string D

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First Fret

Drop D tuning for electric bass

Tuning the rest of the strings to the 4th string D

First tune the 4th string to a D using the MIDI note below.

4th string D tuning note

MIDI

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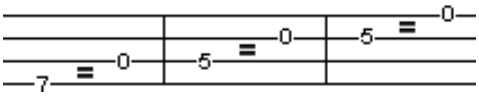
When using the basic tuning method for standard tuning, you would play the 5th fret on the 4th string and tune the 3rd string open to that. In Drop D tuning, you are going to play the 7th fret on the 4th string, then tune the 3rd string open to that. From there, you will tune everything the same as standard tuning. You could also tune the rest of the strings using harmonics.

Basic relative tuning for Drop D



Page 1, getting into Drop D from standard tuning

Page 3, other common Drop D variations

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First Fret

Drop D tuning for electric bass

Other common Drop D variations

- **Drop D down a 1/2 step:** From standard Drop D tuning, tune all of the strings down a 1/2 step (like they were 1 fret lower)
- **Drop D down a whole step:** From standard Drop D tuning, tune all of the strings down a whole step (like they were 2 frets lower). This is sometimes called Drop C by mistake. Drop C would mean to drop only the 6th string down to a C.

Tuning notes for all 4 strings

Drop D standard pitch	D	A	D	G
Strings	**4th**	**3rd**	**2nd**	**1st**

Drop D down a 1/2 step	D♭	A♭	D♭	G♭
Strings	**4th**	**3rd**	**2nd**	**1st**

Drop D down a whole step*	C	G	C	F
Strings	**4th**	**3rd**	**2nd**	**1st**

* this tuning is sometimes mistakenly called Drop C tuning. Drop C would mean that only the 4th string was dropped down to C.

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Page 2, tuning all of the strings to the 4th string D

Page 1, getting into Drop D from standard tuning

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Reading Music

Reading electric bass tablature found on the Internet

Other Symbols used in tab

Internet tablature is limited to the symbols found on the computer keyboard. Therefore some of the more graphic symbols found in published tabs are not available. This is also where individual transcribers will have their own way of doing things. But here are some basic symbols used.

```
h = hammer-on
p = pull-off

/ = slide up
\ = slide down
s = slide


b = bend
r = reverse bend, or release bend


t = right hand tap
+ = right hand tap


x = rhythm click or muted string

v = vibrato
~ = vibrato

(5) = ghost note, or optional note

<5> = harmonic
```

Hammer-ons

Hammer-ons are represented by an "h" placed between 2 different notes. The 1st note is plucked, then you will "hammer" another finger onto the string at the fret indicated by the 2nd number. The force of your finger "hammering" will cause the next note to sound without plucking the string again. Another way that you may see a hammer-on represented in Internet tablature, is this symbol between 2 different notes ^. This is similar to the graphic arc used in

published tablature. If the second of the 2 notes is higher, the ^ represents a hammer-on. Sometimes the addition of an h above the ^ symbol helps clarify things.

```
G:-----------or-------or----------
D:---------------------------h-----
A:-----5h7-------5^7-------5^7----
E:--------------------------------
```

Pull-offs

Pull-offs are represented by a "p" placed between 2 different notes. For a pull-off, you will need to have both fingers placed on the notes before you start. The 1st note is plucked, then the next note is sounded by "pulling off" the finger on the higher fret. You can not just lift up your finger to get the 2nd note to sound. You will need to "pluck" the string with your left hand finger. Pull out away from the bass, and towards the floor. Like the hammer-on, you may see this symbol between 2 notes ^. The way you can tell pull-off apart from a hammer-on, is that the second note is lower than the first for a pull-off. Sometimes the addition of a "p" above the ^ symbol helps to clarify things.

```
G:-----------or-------or----------
D:---------------------------p-----
A:-----7p5-------7^5-------7^5----
E:--------------------------------
```

Reference Lessons

For more information on hammer-ons and pull-offs, check out this lesson.

Hammer-ons and pull-offs - Also known as slurs.

Page 2, Tuning and rhythm

Page 4, Slides, bends, reverse bends, and smears

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Techniques

Hammer-ons and pull-offs

Hammer-ons and pull-offs are also known as slurs. They help to create a smoother sound between notes. It is the equivalent to a saxophone player playing a group of notes with one breath, and not tonguing each note. Or a violin player playing some notes with one bow stroke. That is the way that those instruments slur and get a smoother sound. Below you will learn how to apply slurs to the bass.

Hammer-ons

A hammer-on will involve 2 different notes. A note is plucked, then a second note is sounded by slamming or "hammering" another finger onto the same string at a higher fret.

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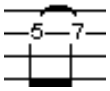
Notation used for hammer-ons

Internet tablature

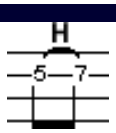
In Internet tablature hammer-ons are represented by an "h" placed between the 2 different notes. Another way that you may see a hammer-on represented in Internet tablature, is this symbol between 2 different notes ^. This is similar to the graphic arc used in published tablature (see below). If the second of the 2 notes is higher, the ^ represents a hammer-on. Sometimes the addition of an h above the ^ symbol helps clarify things.

```
G:-----------or-------or----------
D:---------------------------h-----
A:-----5h7-------5^7-------5^7----
E:--------------------------------
```

Published tablature

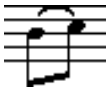


In published tablature that you will find in books and magazines, you will see a curved line or arc over the 2 or more notes involved.



Sometimes there is the addition of an "**H**" above the arc.

Standard notation



Standard notation uses the arc, but usually not the addition of the "**H**" above.

Page 2, Pull-offs

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Techniques

Hammer-ons and pull-offs

Pull-offs

A pull-off can be thought of as the opposite of a hammer-on. There are 2 notes involved. Before starting, you will need to have both left hand fingers that are involved already placed in their perspective frets. The first note is plucked, then a second note is sounded by pulling that finger off of the string with force. You are basically plucking the string with the left hand finger you used for the 1st note first note. You will need to pull both towards the floor, and out away from the neck of the bass.

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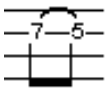
Notation used for pull-offs

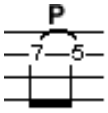
In Internet tablature, pull-offs are represented by a "p" placed between 2 different notes. Like the hammer-on, you may see this symbol between 2 notes ^. The way you can tell pull-off apart from a hammer-on, is that the second note is lower than the first for a pull-off. Sometimes the addition of a "p" above the ^ symbol helps to clarify things.

```
G:-----------or-------or----------
D:--------------------------p-----
A:-----7p5-------7^5-------7^5----
E:--------------------------------
```

Published tablature



In published tablature that you will find in books and magazines, you will see a curved line or arc over the 2 or more notes involved.



Sometimes there is the addition of an "**P**" above the arc.

Standard notation

Standard notation uses the arc, but usually not the addition of the "**P**" above.

Page 1, Hammer-ons

Page 3, Hammer-on and pull-off exercise

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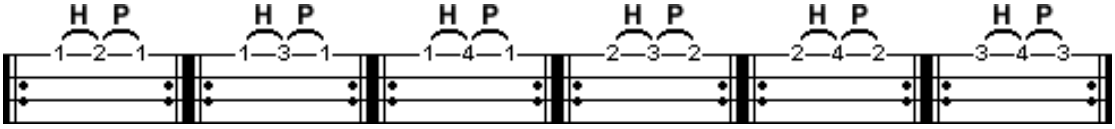
Techniques

Hammer-ons and pull-offs

Hammer-on and pull of exercise

Below is an exercise that will not only help you with hammer-ons and pull-offs, but also help develop your overall left hand technique. Even though this exercise is written in tablature format starting at the first fret, you may want to play this exercise a little higher on the neck of the bass. So consider the number that you see as the fingers you should use rather that necessarily having to play this in the first position. Each hammer-on and pull-off combination should be played at least 2 times. Of course more repetitions are better.



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Page 2, Pull-offs

Page 1, Hammer-ons

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Reading Music

Reading electric bass tablature found on the Internet

Slides

For a slide, the forward slash (/) is used to indicate an upward slide, and the backward slash (\) is used to represent a downward slide.

```
G:-----5/7-----7\5----
D:--------------------
A:--------------------
E:--------------------
```

You may see a slide symbol that does not have a note designated as the starting point. In that case, just start your slide from a few frets above or below depending on the direction you are headed. This is more than likely just a decoration or an ornamentation of the note, rather than a transition between 2 notes like above.

```
G:-----/7--or--\7---
D:------------------
A:------------------
E:------------------
```

One other symbol commonly used for slides, is an "s".

```
G:---5s7---7s5----
D:----------------
A:----------------
E:----------------
```

Reference Lessons

For more information on slides, check out this lesson.

Slides - Another bass guitar technique used to ornament a note, or to transition between notes.

Bends

Bend are not very common on the bass, but here is how they are notated if you do see them. The most common symbol used for a bend in Internet tab, is the "b". The "b" is placed between two different numbers. The first number indicates the fret you are playing. The second number indicates the pitch that the bent note should sound like. You will not play the note represented by second number. It is only a reference to tell you how far to bend. Sometimes the second note is written in parentheses, just to clarify that it is not plucked.

```
G:----------- or -----------------
D:-----7b9----------7b(9)---------
A:--------------------------------
E:--------------------------------
```

Reverse Bends (Release Bends)

A reverse bend is indicated by an "r". The first number that you see is the note that the second note sounds like when bent. Sometimes the note is bent before you pick it, this is known as a pre-bend. Other times the reverse bend will be part of a bend, then a reverse bend combination. Either way you are hearing the bent note come back down to the note represented by the second number.

```
G:----------- or -----------------
D:-----9r7----------(9)r7---------
A:--------------------------------
E:--------------------------------
```

Smears

A smear is when you bend a string just slightly, not enough to bend the string up to the next half step higher(1 fret). This is sometimes indicated by just a "b" after a note, with no real indication of how far to bend it. Or, sometimes you will see a .5. The .5 indicating a quarter of a step bend. A quarter of a step would be equal to half of one fret. This is by no means an exact measurement of how far to bend.

```
G:------------- or ---------------
D:-------5b------------5^(.5)-----
A:-----7----7--------7--------7---
E:--------------------------------
```

Page 3, Other symbols used in tab, hammer-ons, and pull-offs

Page 5, Ghost notes, optional notes rhythm clicks, and muted strings

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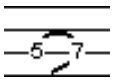
Slides

Sliding is just another technique that gives more interest and life to notes. The idea is that you are going to fret a note (or notes) and then move (slide) to another fret without taking the pressure off your finger (fingers) as you move.



In this example you are fretting the note on the 3rd string, 5th fret and sliding up to the 7th fret. The curved line over top is used to indicate that this is a legato slide. This basically means that you are not going to pluck the note at the 7th fret, you will hear it ring after sliding up to it.

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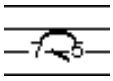

In this example you are fretting the note on the 3rd string, 7th fret and sliding down to the 7th fret. Again the curved line over top is used to indicate that this is a legato slide.

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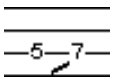

Here you are fretting the note on the 3rd string, 5th fret and sliding up to the 7th fret. But because there is not a curved line over the top, you are going to pluck the note at the 7th fret after sliding.

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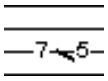

This is the same as above, only sliding down.

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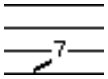

Here you are sliding up to the 3rd string, 7th fret from an undetermined fret below (usually 2-3 frets). The idea here is that you are not hearing 2 notes, as in the examples above. This is a quick slide, and is hear as one note. The slide is just a decoration of that one note.

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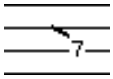

This is the same as above, only sliding down to the 3rd string, 7th fret.

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A glissando, or gliss, uses a longer line. Here you are playing a note, and then sliding up, but not stopping on any particular note. In fact you are releasing the pressure on the string before you stop your left hand. That way you do not hear a stopping point. Just generic slide up. This is used for an effect.

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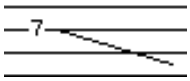

Here is a gliss down.

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```
--------
--------
---5s7--
--------
--------
--------
```

Besides the lines that are used to indicate a slide, Internet tablature will sometimes use an "s".

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Reading Music

Reading electric bass tablature found on the Internet

Ghost notes and optional notes

The best description of a ghost note, is a note that is felt but not heard. You will play the note softer, and without emphasis. The note is usually in-between 2 parentheses. In addition, notes in parentheses could mean optional notes. For instance, if a particular riff is repeated, but sometimes the bass player throws in some additional notes, those additional notes may be in parentheses. Do keep in mind the use of parentheses for bent notes as well.

The example below could mean either a ghost note or an optional note. There is no way of telling without a recording. And really in this context, do either and it will sound fine.

```
G:--------------------
D:--------------0-----
A:---3--(0)--3--------
E:--------------------
```

Right Hand Tapping

Right hand tapping is basically a hammer-on with a right hand finger, usually your 1st or 2nd. This hammer-on with your right hand is indicated with a "t". Pull-offs from your right hand are indicated with a "p", like a normal pull off. Another way that you may see right hand tapping notated, is a "+" above the tapped note, along with any of the variations of hammer-on and pull-off notation.

```
                            +      +
G:------t12p5h8t12--- or –12^5^7^12---
D:-----------------------------------
A:-----------------------------------
E:-----------------------------------
```

Rhythm click or Muted string

When you see an "x" in tablature, it means a rhythmic click, or to mute the string. In the following example, you would pluck the note on the 3rd fret of the 4th string. Then lift your left hand finger up so that you are no longer pressing the strings down against the fret bar, but

you are still touching the string. So that you will hear a "click" or dull thud sound when the string in pluck. This is done as percussive sound.

```
G:--------------------
D:--------------------
A:--------------------
E:----3-x-x-3-x-x-3---
```

If you were to see an "x" between 2 other notes on different string, this would mean to mute that string. You will usually mute the string with a finger that you are already using to play the next note lower. In the following example you will mute the 3rd string with your 1st finger, which is the same finger that you are using to play the note on the 4th string. For the most part, try and avoid using a finger that is not already in use.

```
G:----------
D:----5----- 4th finger
A:----x----- mute with your 1st finger
E:----3----- 1st finger
```

Page 4, Slides, bends, reverse bends, and smears

Page 6, Vibrato, harmonics, palm mutes

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Vibrato

Vibrato is a slight fluctuation in pitch, that gives more depth and sustain to a note. This is done by using a technique similar to bending. You will rock your wrist and slightly bend the string up and down at a constant rate. Vibrato is notated in a couple of ways. First with an "v" after the note. Another common notation, is using a "~ " after or above the note that vibrato should be applied to.

```
                    ~~~~
G:-------------------------
D:--------or------or-------
A:-----5v----5~~~----5-----
E:-------------------------
```

Natural Harmonics

Natural harmonics are notes that produce a bell like sound when you touch a string over a particular fret bar. The notation that is most commonly used is the fret that you will touch, surrounded by the less than and greater than symbols "<12>".

```
G:----<12>---
D:-----------
A:-----------
E:-----------
```

Other Harmonics

There is not really a standardized notation for other types of harmonics. These include artificial harmonics, touch harmonics, tap harmonics, and pinch harmonics. The individual transcriber will usually write an explanation of a technique that is not easily notated.

Palm Mutes

Palm mutes are most often done on the bass when a pick is used. A palm mute is where you take the side of your right hand (4th finger side) and lightly touch the string at the edge of the bridge. This will give the notes that you are playing a muffled sound. This is most often notated with the letters "P.M." written under the notes.

```
G:------------------------
D:------------------------
A:------------------------
E:----0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-----

    P.M.-----------|
```

Page 5, Ghost notes, optional notes rhythm clicks, and muted strings

Page 7, Slaps and pops

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Reading Music

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Slapping and popping

This is a technique that you will most often find in funk oriented tunes. The 2 basic ideas involved are the slap, and the pop. A

A slap is where you snap a string with your right hand thumb, thus produce a sound from the force of hitting the string. This is often indicated by an S underneath the note.

```
G:----------
D:----------
A:----------
E:---3--3---
     S  S
```

A pop is where you use your right hand index finger to snap the string. You pull the string up, and let it snap back down against the fretboard of the bass. A pop is indicated by a P placed underneath the note.

```
G:----------
D:---3--5---
A:----------
E:----------
     P  P
```

Reference Lessons

For more information on slapping, check out these lessons.

Classic Internet Slapping Lessons

Lesson #1
Lesson #2
Lesson #3

If you have any further questions regarding how to read tablature, go to the Cyberfret.com forums.

Page 6, Vibrato, harmonics, palm mutes

Page 1, Internet tablature basics

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Slapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #1

Doug Wellington
doug@arizona.edu

This is the first in a series of lessons on slapping and popping on the bass guitar. It was inspired by discussion on the Usenet News group REC.MUSIC.MAKERS.BASS and will be distributed there and on The Bottom Line.

Ian Stephenson (ian@ohm.york.ac.uk) started with a lesson on tapping, and I am going to continue in his style, which means using ascii TAB and NOTATION. If anyone has better suggestions for presentation, please write to me at the above address. Like Ian, I would like to get some feedback as to how you like this lesson and its format.

We'll start with some real basics, and progress from there. The first thing to decide is how to hold the bass for slapping. There are two extremes. The first, which I call the Tony Oppenheim style, uses a low positioning of the bass. This results in the arm being straighter and the fingers of the slapping hand being perpendicular to the strings. The other extreme, practiced by Stu Hamm, is to have the bass higher which results in the forearm being perpendicular to the strings and the elbow resting almost directly above the bridge. I suggest that you try both styles and see which one is more comfortable. If you hang your bass low, try the Oppenheim method. If you are more of a "jazzer" and have your bass up high, then the Stu Hamm method will be easier. I think I'm a jazzer, so I wear my bass up as high as my strap will go. :-)

One of the most important things in slapping is developing good speed. The best way to be fast is to learn to relax as much as possible. It is especially important to relax the slapping hand. Let your hand hang

down naturally by your side. Now, without changing the position of your fingers, bend your arm and hold your hand over the strings right at the end of the fretboard. This is very close to the position you want your hand to remain in.

Mute the strings with your fretting hand. Keep your thumb down behind the neck, with the contact point about half way down. Your thumb should be pointing almost straight up. Rest your fingers lightly on the fretboard, just enough to keep the strings quiet. Try to keep your fingers as straight as possible.

Keep your slapping hand at the end of the fretboard, with your thumb hanging over the last frets and your first finger between the end of the fretboard and your pickup. Now, twist your slapping arm so that your thumb moves away from the bass. The arm itself should remain stationary and just rotate. You only have to twist enough so that your thumb is at most 3 inches (75 mm) away from the strings. Rotate the arm back towards the bass, let your thumb hit the E string, then bounce back. Do this almost as lightly as possible, just enough to hear a "click". Repeat this motion several times, always hitting the E string. Once you feel comfortable with this, move to the A string and continue until you feel comfortable with that. Then alternate slaps on the E and A strings.

Now for some noise! Lift your fretting fingers off of the strings, and try some slaps. Slap once and then lightly mute the strings again. Repeat this until you get a nice consistant sound and can dampen the strings quietly. (We'll get into left hand slaps in a future lesson.) If you have a metronome, set it to somewhere between 40 and 50 beats per minute, and slap and mute one note per beat. Start slow and strive for consistancy. You want a nice steady beat and a smooth mute.

OK, OK, I know you guys are itching to go on, so I'll give you one more tidbit before signing off until the next lesson. Another important element of slapping is hammer ons. A hammer on is when you play a note with your fretting hand, usually right after you have played one with your picking hand. To demonstrate, place the first finger of your fretting hand on the fifth fret of the A string, and slap the A string. Now firmly place your pinky finger of your fretting

hand down onto the seventh fret, sounding a higher note. Cool, huh? Start up the metronome again, and setting it to between 40 and 50, practice this slap and hammer on until it is smooth. Don't bother muting this, let the notes ring. Slap the note on the beat, and then

hammer on half way in between the beats. Go for smooth and steady!

```
                                __
|-----------------|      |--/--\--------------------
|-----------------|      |  \   | .
|--5----7---------|      |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|      |      / .         O
   S    H                |-----/-------O------------
                         |    /
                         |---/----------------------
                         |
                         |--------------------------
```

Once you get that down, let's combine a slap and hammer on with a slap and mute. Start with your first finger on the fifth fret of the A string. Slap the A string, then hammer on to the seventh fret. Now slap the open E string, then mute. Release enough pressure on the A string to stop the note just as you slap the E string. Keep the muting as noiseless as possible. TAB for this looks like:

```
   q  q  q  q
|-------------|
|o-----------o|
|o-5--7------o|
|--------0----|
   S  H  S  M
```

Work this up by starting slowly (40-50 beats per minute) and then moving up. Make it smooth and relaxed now and it will be lightning fast later. So, work on this and we'll add to it next time.

Email any comments to me: doug@arizona.edu.
This article (c) Copyright 1993 by Doug Wellington.
You may distribute it freely so long as it is not modified.

Previous tapping and slapping lessons are available via FTP from KAPPA.RICE.EDU in the directory /pub/bass/lessons. If you do not have FTP, and wish to retrieve the lessons via email, send mail to ftpmail@decwrl.dec.com with the message "help".

---

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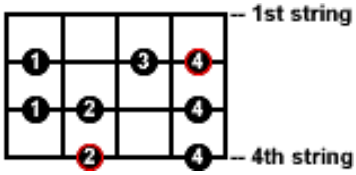
Scales

Electric bass scale primer

You have already seen one way that a scale may be written, in tablature form. Other ways that you will see scales written is the format of a picture that will represents all of the notes that are in the scale. You would play he scale starting on the lowest sounding note, work your way to the highest, and then come back down to the lowest note.

Horizontal scale charts

This scale chart is written from the same perspective as tablature. Meaning that the 4th string is the bottom line, and the 1st string is the top line.



Major scale ascending

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Major scale descending

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On the Internet you may also see a scale chart written using just plain text. The numbers in this case indicate the fingers that you should use.

```
|-1-|---|-3-|---| -1st string
|-1-|---|-3-|---|
|-1-|---|-3-|---|
|-1-|---|---|-4-| -4th string
  |
5th fret
```

Page 1, Scale basics

Page 3, Vertical scale charts

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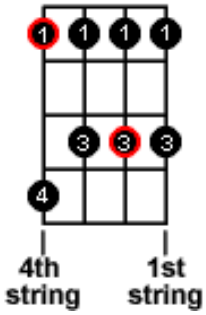
Vertical scale charts

Scale charts are sometimes written in a vertical format. The chart is just a picture of the neck of the bass if it was standing up, neck in the air. You would still just play the notes from the lowest sounding to the highest and back down. If you are familiar with guitar, this is the same way that chord charts are written.

Text format

```
+---+---+---+
|   |   |   |
1   1   1   1  - 5th fret
|   |   |   |
+---+---+---+
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
+---+---+---+
|   |   |   |
|   3   3   3
|   |   |   |
+---+---+---+
|   |   |   |
4   |   |   |
|   |   |   |
+---+---+---+
|           |
4th string    1st string
```

Graphic format



Page 2, Horizontal scale charts

Page 4, The root of the scale and what fret to start on.

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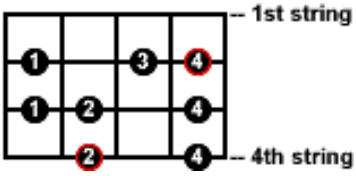
Scales

Electric bass scale primer

The root

Every scale has a root. This is the basic note that the scale is named after. If you have an ***A major scale***, then then root is ***A***. In scale charts, the root is often indicated in some way. In the scale chart below the root is indicated by a red circle.



You will notice that there are 2 notes that are circled in this scale fingering. That is because there are only so many different notes in any particular scale fingering, before the names of the notes start over. So both of the note that are circled in red have the same note name, they are just an octave apart.

If you take the above scale form, and play it so that the root is an A, you have an A major scale. The 4th string, 5th fret is an A, so that is where you would play this scale. In order to understand what the name of a scale will be when played at different frets, you will need to know what the names of the notes on the neck of the bass are. Especially the 4th and 3rd strings, which all of the basic scale forms that you will learn will be based from.

Page 3, Horizontal scale charts

Page 1, Scale basics

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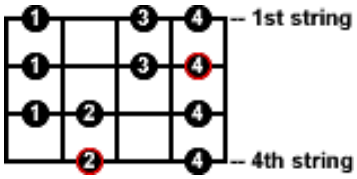
Scales

Fundamental scales for electric bass

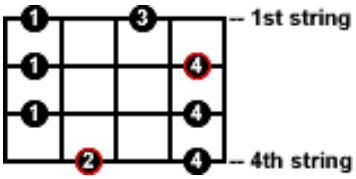
Extending the basic scale forms

Here are the basic scale forms from the previous page, only with the addition of the notes that would be on the 1st string.

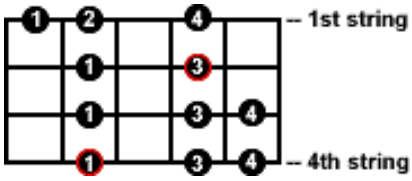
Major



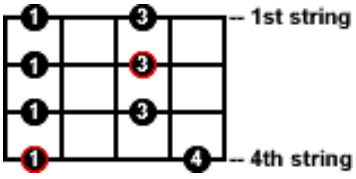
Major Pentatonic



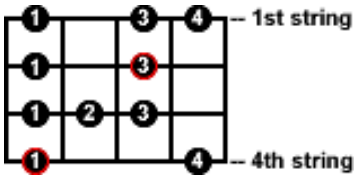
Minor



Minor Pentatonic



Blues



Page 1, Basic scale forms

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Scales

Major Scale Forms

Training your ear to hear the root of the scale

Since these major scale forms do not always start and end on the root, here is a good way to practice them. Start on the lowest root within the form. Then go down to the lowest note in the scale form, and return back up to the lowest root. You may even want to pause slightly on the root, just so that your ear can relate all of the other notes in the scale to that root. Then work your way to the highest note in the scale form, and then back down to the lowest root again.

Here is an example of this in tablature form

```
G:-----------------------------|------4-5-7-5-4------
D:--5-4-------------------4-5-|--5-7-----------7-5--
A:------7-5-----------5-7-----|---------------------
E:----------8-7-5-7-8---------|---------------------
```

Page 1, How to think of scale forms on the bass

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Scales

Major Scale Forms

Putting together the pieces of the scale puzzle

Think of the major scale fingerings that you are about to learn as pieces of a puzzle. Two adjacent scale forms will share the same notes on the border. Check out these 2 forms of a G major scale. The parts of the scale that are circled show the notes that are in common.

```
|--A--|-----|--B--|--C--|
|--E--|-----|--F#-|--G--|
|--B--|--C--|-----|--D--|
|-----|--G--|-----|--A--|
          |
      3rd fret

|--B--|--C--|-----|--D--|-----|
|--F#-|--G--|-----|--A--|-----|
|-----|--D--|-----|--E--|-----|
|-----|--A--|-----|--B--|--C--|
          |
      5th fret
```

Page 2, Training your ear to hear the root of the scale

Page 4, 5 positions of a G major scale

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Scales

Major Scale Forms

5 position of a G major scale

A major scale only has 7 different note names. Therefore each degree of the scale is assigned a number from 1 to 7. This number is refereed to as the "scale function". Which is basically just showing how a particular note in the scale relates to the root (1). So in all of the scale positions below you will see a suggested fingering, and to the right you will see the scale functions listed. At the very least you want to know where the root is in the scale form.

G A B C D E F# = G major scale
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 = Scale functions

Note Names

```
|-A-|---|-B-|-C-|
|-E-|---|-F#|-G-|
|-B-|-C-|---|-D-|
|---|-G-|---|-A-|
        |
     3rd fret
```

Scale functions

```
|-2-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-6-|---|-7-|-1-|
|-3-|-4-|---|-5-|
|---|-1-|---|-2-|
        |
     3rd fret
```

Suggested fingering

```
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|
|---|-2-|---|-4-|
        |
     3rd fret

|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|---|
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|---|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|---|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
        |
     5th fret

|-1-|---|-3-|---|
```

Scale functions

```
|-2-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-6-|---|-7-|-1-|
|-3-|-4-|---|-5-|
|---|-1-|---|-2-|
        |
     3rd fret

|-3-|-4-|---|-5-|---|
|-7-|-1-|---|-2-|---|
|---|-5-|---|-6-|---|
|---|-2-|---|-3-|-4-|
        |
     5th fret

|-5-|---|-6-|---|
```

```
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|
  |
 7th fret

|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|
|---|-2-|---|-4-|
      |
     10th fret

|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|---|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|---|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
      |
     12th fret
```

```
|-2-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-6-|---|-7-|-1-|
|-3-|-4-|---|-5-|
  |
 7th fret

|-6-|---|-7-|-1-|
|-3-|-4-|---|-5-|
|-7-|-1-|---|-2-|
|---|-5-|---|-6-|
      |
     10th fret

|-7-|-1-|---|-2-|---|
|---|-5-|---|-6-|---|
|---|-2-|---|-3-|-4-|
|---|-6-|---|-7-|-1-|
      |
     12th fret
```

Once you have played the 5 forms above, you could just start with the first form again at the 15th fret. This is going to be very important to know once you transpose these scale forms to other keys.

```
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|
|---|-2-|---|-4-|
      |
     15th fret
```

Page 3, Putting together the pieces of the scale puzzle

Page 4, Transposing the scale forms to other keys

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Scales

Major Scale Forms

Transposing the scale forms to other keys

So if you were going to transpose all of these scale forms to A major, the lowest form on the neck would be the one below.

```
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|---|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|---|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|---|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
      |
    2nd fret
```

Then the next position up would be this.

```
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|---|-3-|-4-|
|-1-|-2-|---|-4-|
|---|-2-|---|-4-|
      |
    5th fret
```

Again you want to just think of these 5 scale forms as pieces of a puzzle. Learn how these pieces connect. If you are playing in one position, you want to know what the next higher and next lower form of the scale would be.

Page 4, 5 positions of a G major scale

Page 1, How to think of scale forms on the bass

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Bass Line Creation

Root - 5th bass lines

In the beginning, there was the root....and it was good. But soon the root became became lonely, discontent, and needed a partner. The root found its perfect partner in the 5th of the chord, and they lived happily ever after.

If the root is the most common note used to create a bass line, then the 5th of the chord might be considered the next most common. This is just another note that can be freely used over a chord regardless of key, and most of the time regardless of what type of chord is being played. The exception will be explained later in the lesson.

The 5th

In order to understand what the **5th** is, you will need to understand the basics of chord construction.

If you take the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of a major scale, this is a C major chord. The 5th is a G. So when referring to the 5th, we are talking about the 5th note in a major scale. Using interval talk, you would call this a perfect 5th.

```
C   D   E   F   G   A   B   C = C Major scale
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   1
|_____|_____| = C (C major chord)
root  3rd   5th
```

Most basic chords...major, minor, 7, min7, maj7, sus2, sus4...they all have 2 notes in common. The root, and the 5th. So the chords C, Cm, C7, Cm7, Cmaj7, Csus2, and Csus4 all share a C root note and a G note (the 5th of the chord). There are notes that are different in each of these chords, but knowing that they all share 2 notes is a powerful bit of information. That means for any type of chord the guitarist is playing, you can play the same root and 5th "shape" for all of them (most of the time).

So if you can memorize the "shape" of where the 5th is in relationship to the root, you will be ready to add another tool to your bass line building toolbox.

Page 2, Root - 5th shapes

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Music Theory

Basic Chord Construction

Building chords from the major scale

While you will not strum chords very often like a guitar player might, you will play the notes of a chord in your bass lines. When the notes of a chord are played one at a time, this is known as an arpeggio. Playing arpeggios will be how you apply the knowledge of chords to the bass.

Basic chords are created by stacking up every other note in a major scale. In this lesson we will be using a C major scale to explain how chords are created. Below are the notes of a C major scale.

C Major scale = C D E F G A B C

If I start on C, and skip every other note in the scale for a total of 3 notes, this a C major chord.

```
C D E F G A B C
|___|___| = C* (C major chord)
```

*When you are looking at a chord symbol, if you just see a letter it is a major chord. So "C" means "C major".

If you start on D, and do the same thing a Dm chord is created. Why this is a minor chord will have to be looked into a little later. So for now it is just one of those things that you have to accept on blind faith. The notes D, F, and A create a Dm chord.

```
C D E F G A B C
  |___|___| = Dm* (D minor chord)
```

*The small m after the D means minor

The process of stacking 3 notes up in the major scale could continue until you have 7 different chords. There are 7 different notes in a major scale.

```
C D E F G A B C
    |___|___| = Em (E minor chord)

C D E F G A B C
```

```
        |___|___| = F (F major chord)

C D E F G A B C D
        |___|___| = G (G major chord)

C D E F G A B C D E
          |___|___| = Am (A minor chord)

C D E F G A B C D E F
            |___|___| = Bo* (B diminished chord)
```

*The small circle after the B means diminished when used in a chord symbol. A diminished chord is just another "flavor" of chord sound.

These first chords that we are taking a look at are sometimes called ***triads***. A triad is just a term for a 3 note chord.

It is a little easier to visualize how chords are created on the piano as opposed to the bass. The video below shows these seven chords and how they would be played on the piano. The white keys from C-C form a C major scale, therefore to create the basic chords you skip every other white key. This video does not have any sound.

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Page 2, How the chords function in the key

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Music Theory

Basic Chord Construction

How the chords function in the key

For this lesson we are looking at the chords build from the notes of a C major scale. These are the chords that are in the ***key*** of C major. Each chord in a key has certain function within that key. The word ***function*** just means that particular chords will have a unique sound in relationship to the main chord of the key. The main chord in this case is C (C major).

To show how each chord functions in the key, Roman numerals are used as a way of labeling the chords. A Roman numeral like **I**, **IV**, or **V** indicates a major chord. If you see a Roman numeral with a small m after it, this is the same as seeing a letter with a small m. It means that the chord is minor. So **IIm**, **IIIm**, and **VIm** are all minor chords. The small circle after a Roman numeral means diminished, like **VII°**.

Chord functions in the key of C major

C	D	E	F	G	A	B - C major scale
|	|	|	|	|	|	|
C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	B° - Chord Name
I	IIm*	IIIm	IV	V	VIm	VII° - Function

*Traditional classical theory uses a lower case Roman numeral to indicate a minor chord function....ii, iii, vi. And the small m is not used. It more modern theory...Jazz, Rock, and other contemporary music, chord functions use capital Roman numerals. Then a small m is used if the chord is minor, a small circle is used for diminished, and there are other modifiers as well that will tell you what the quality of the chord is. (Ex. IIm, IIsus2, II7)

The harmonization (creation of chords or harmony) of a major scale will always follow the same pattern, no matter what major key you are in. The chord build from the first degree of the scale is always major. The chord build from the 2nd degree is always minor, etc.

Chord functions in all major keys

I	**major chord** **built on the 1st degree of the scale**

IIm	**minor chord** **built on the 2nd degree of the scale**
IIIm	**minor chord** **built on the 3rd degree of the scale**
IV	**major chord** **built on the 4th degree of the scale**
V	**major chord** **built on the 5th degree of the scale**
VIm	**minor chord** **built on the 6th degree of the scale**
VII°	**diminished chord** **built on the 7th degree of the scale**

Page 1, basic chord construction

Page 3, The chords in all of the major keys

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Music Theory

Basic Chord Construction

Basic chords and functions in all of the major keys

Below is a table of all of the ***Diatonic*** Chords in the Major Keys

Diatonic means that all of the notes in the chord (or a melody) are contained within a particular scale or key. (Major scale/key in this case)

I	IIm	IIIm	IV	V	VIm	VII°
C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	B°
G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#°
D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#°
A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#°
E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#°
B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m	A#°
F#	G#m	A#m	B	C#	D#m	E#°
I	**IIm**	**IIIm**	**IV**	**V**	**VIm**	**VII°**
F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm	E°
Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F	Gm	A°
Eb	Fm	Gm	Ab	Bb	Cm	D°

Ab	Bbm	Cm	Db	Eb	Fm	G°
Db	Ebm	Fm	Gb	Ab	Bbm	C°
Gb	Abm	Bbm	Cb	Db	Ebm	F°

Page 2, How the chords function in the key

Page 4, Applying the theory to the bass

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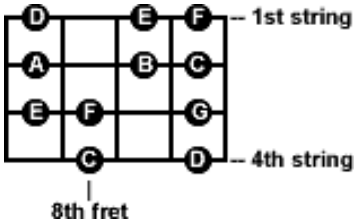
Music Theory

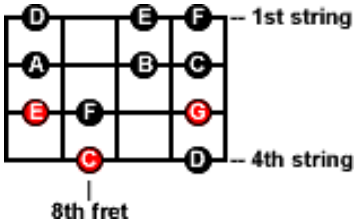
Basic Chord Construction

Applying the theory to the bass

Chords are applied on the bass in the form of arpeggios. And arpeggio is just the notes of a chord played individually. So here we are going to look at the arpeggios (chords) that are contained within a basic major scale fingering. You can really apply this same idea to other major scale forms as you learn them.

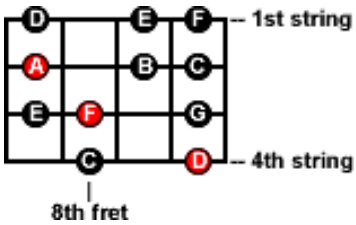


Here is a basic fingering for a C major scale.

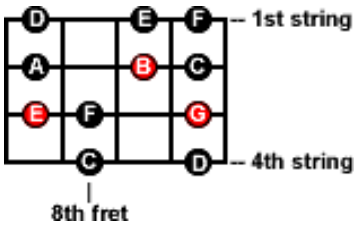


C - I

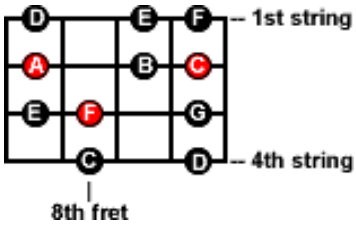
Here you are playing every other note in the scale starting on C. This is the C major chord (arpeggio).



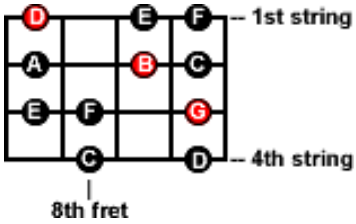
Dm - IIm



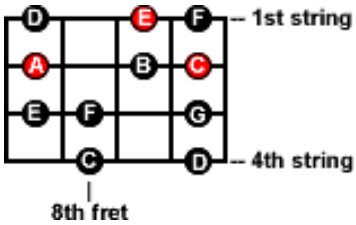
Em - IIIm



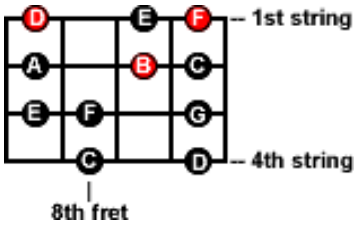
F - IV



G - V

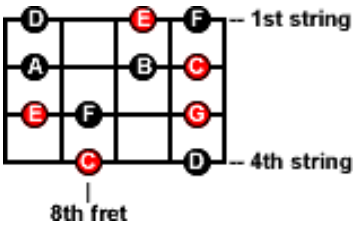


Am - VIm



B° - VII°

You could play all of the notes of the chord that are in one position, So here is a C major arpeggio that covers the full range of the scale.



Page 3, The chords in all of the major keys

Page 1, basic chord construction

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Bass Line Creation

Root - 5th bass lines

Root - 5th shapes

Here is a basic major scale form. The "**1**" is the root, and the "**5**" is the 5th. The major scale only has 7 different note names before they will start over. That is why after the 7 you see another 1.

Major scale functions

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st
|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th
```

C major scale note names

```
|--D--|-----|--E--|--F--| -1st
|--A--|-----|--B--|--C--|
|--E--|--F--|-----|--G--|
|-----|--C--|-----|--D--| -4th
         |
       8th fret
```

So from this you can see the "shape" or the visual relationship between the root (1) and the 5th (5).

Basic root - 5th shape

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -1st
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----| -4th
```

Major scale functions

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st
|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th
```

So no matter what string you are playing the root on, the 5th will be 2 frets higher on the next highest string.

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -1st string
|-----|-----|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -4th string
```

```
|-----|-----|-----|--5--| -1st string
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -4th string
```

When looking at the relationship of the root on the 2nd string to the 5th on the 3rd string, they are both on the same fret. The 5th is just on the next string lower than the root.

Basic root - 5th shape

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -1st
|-----|-----|-----|--1--|
|-----|-----|-----|--5--|
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -4th
```

Major scale functions

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st
|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th
```

So no matter what string you are playing the root on, the 5th will be on the same fret on the next lower string.

```
|-----|-----|-----|--1--| -1st string
|-----|-----|-----|--5--|
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -4th string

|-----|-----|-----|-----| -1st string
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|--1--|
|-----|-----|-----|--5--| -4th string
```

Page 1, Intro to root - 5th bass lines

Page 3, Root - 5th forms

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Bass Line Creation

Root - 5th bass lines

Root - 5th forms

In the most basic sense, you are going to relate your bass lines to the root notes on the 3rd and 4th strings. This is just a good way for a beginner to get a handle on things. So that means that you are going to memorize 2 larger root-5th forms. Each relating to the the root being on the 4th string, or the root on the 3rd string.

Root on the 4th string form

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -1st string
|-----|-----|-----|--1--|
|-----|-----|-----|--5--|
|-----|-(1)-|-----|-----| -4th string
```

The **(1)** is the primary root that you are using as your reference.

Here is the full form based on the a root of C on the 4th string.

```
      1   5   1   5   1
G:---------------------------
D:------------10-------------
A:--------10------10---------
E:----8---------------8------
```

Root on the 3rd string form

```
|-----|-----|-----|--1--| -1st string
|-----|-----|-----|--5--|
|-----|-(1)-|-----|-----|
|-----|--5--|-----|-----| -4th string
```

If you where to practice this entire form based on the root of C on the 3rd string, you would play the following. Notice that you are starting on the root on the 3rd string, going down to the 4th string, then all the way up to the 1st string, then coming back down to the root on the 3rd.

This is just a good what to get your ear used the sound of every thing in relationship to the lowest sounding root in the form. If you where to just start on the 5th on on the 4th string, your ear would end up hearing everything in relationship that note instead of the root.

```
      1   5   1   5   1   5   1
G:--------------------5-----------
D:----------------5-------5-------
A:----3-------3---------------3---
E:--------5-----------------------
```

Page 2, Root 5th shapes

Page 4, Root - 5th bass line examples

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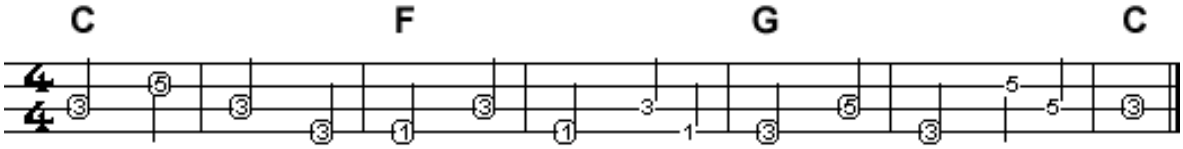
Bass Line Creation

Root - 5th bass lines

Root - 5th bass line examples

Root-5th bass lines are used a lot in country music. Here is an short example of how they might be used in this style.



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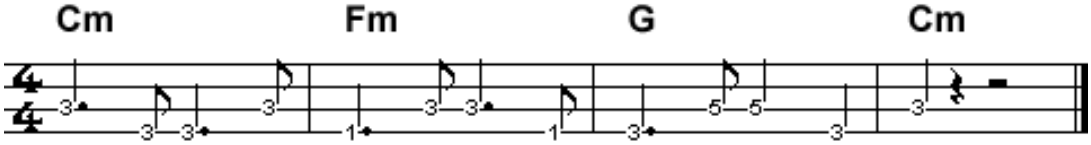
Here is a Latin style bass line that uses roots and 5ths



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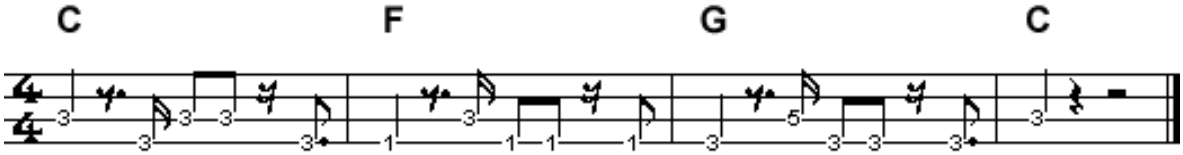
Here we get a little funky.



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Or course root-5th bass lines can be used in all styles of music. An they don't have to but used to the extent of the previous examples. They can also be used in conjunction with other bass line creation techniques.

Page 3, Root - 5th forms

Page 5, The exception

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Bass Line Creation

Root - 5th bass lines

The Exception

At the beginning of this lesson I said that you can play the same root and 5th "shape" regardless of what type of chord is being played (most of the time). Well here is the exception to this. Augmented, diminished, 7(#5), 7(b5)...these use a different type of 5th. You can still play a root-5th bass line, but you will have to alter the 5th to fit the chord. Part of this will involve an understanding of theory beyond the scope of this lesson. But if you see this in a chord symbol (**#5** or **b5)**, then you have to alter your 5th accordingly. So if you see C7(#5), you will have raise the 5th (5) up one fret to **#5** (sharp 5). And if you have a C7(b5) you will have to lower all the 5th down one fret to **b5** (flat 5). Augmented chords used **#5**, and diminished chords will use **b5**.

Here are the shapes used for b5 and #5. Remember that the you can apply these to any set of string.

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -1st string
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-b5--|--5--|-#5--|
|--1--|-----|-----|-----| -4th string
```

```
|-----|-----|-----|-----| -1st string
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|--1--|-----|-----|
|-b5--|--5--|-#5--|-----| -4th string
```

Page 4, Root - 5th bass line examples

Page 1, Intro to root - 5th bass lines

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Music Theory

Pentatonic Scales

Penta is the Greek root word for five. So a pentatonic scale consists of only 5 different notes. While there are many possibilities for arranging 5 different notes to create a scale, we are going to look at the 2 most common. They are major pentatonic, and minor pentatonic.

In order to fully understand how pentatonic scales are constructed, you should have an understanding of how to construct basic 7 note major and minor scales. Because pentatonic scales are derived from them.

Prerequisite lessons:

Constructing major scales - this is the starting point for understanding all music theory.

Natural minor scales - Minor scale construction, and the relationship between major and minor. Learn how the theory is applied to the neck of the bass.

Below is a basic review of major and minor scales, but you should also read the theory lessons here at CyberfretBass.com that cover these topics in more detail.

Major scales

A major scale is just a pattern of whole steps and half steps (W W H W W W H). A C major scale consists of the natural notes from C to C (no sharps or flats). Each note in the scale is assigned a number from 1 to 7. These numbers are very important to your understanding of music theory. As you are looking at different scales and arpeggios, you will be using these numbers to help understand how they are constructed. The major scale is the constant to which you will be comparing everything else to.

```
C D E F G A B C - C major scale
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 - scale functions
```

Basic major scale
functions indicated

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st string
|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th string
```

Minor scales

If you rearrange the notes of a C major scale to go from A to A instead of C to C, this is an A minor or A natural minor scale. It has it's own pattern of whole steps and half steps (W H W W H W W) So a C major scale and A minor scale consist of the same notes, just in a different order. If you apply this pattern of whole steps and half steps to the notes from C - C, you will have to flat the E, A and B notes. This is a C minor scale. You can now see the difference between major and minor by comparing C minor to the C major scale. Since E was the 3rd note in a C major scale, Eb now is labeled with the function "b3"....(flat 3) . So the minor scale has a b3, b6, and b7 in comparison to the major scale. These numbers are referred to as the formula for a scale.

The formula for a natural minor scale is **1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7**

```
C D Eb F G Ab Bb C - C minor scale
1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 1 - scale functions
```

Basic minor scale fingering
functions indicated

```
|--2--|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----| -1st string
|-----|-b7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--4--|-----|--5--|-b6--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--| -4th string
```

Page 2, The major pentatonic scale

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Music Theory

Pentatonic Scales

Major pentatonic scales

A major pentatonic scale comes from a major scale by removing the 4th and 7th degrees. So a major pentatonic scale consists of only the 1 2 3 5 6 of the major scale.

```
C D E F G A B C - C major scale
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 - scale functions
```

Basic major scale
functions indicated

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|--4--| -1st string
|--6--|-----|--7--|--1--|
|--3--|--4--|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th string
```

It may seem funny, but the formula for a major pentatonic scale is 1 2 3 5 6. The G may be the 4th note in a major pentatonic scale, but it is not considered a "4". Remember that the numbers that you see in music are in relationship to the major scale. And in a C major scale, G is the 5th note.

```
C D E G A C- C major scale
1 2 3 5 6 1 - scale functions
```

Basic major pentatonic scale
functions indicated

```
|--2--|-----|--3--|-----| -1st string
|--6--|-----|-----|--1--|
|--3--|-----|-----|--5--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--| -4th string
```

For a reference page with all major pentatonic scale forms click the button below.

C major pentatonic scale forms

Page 1, Major and minor scale review

Page 3, Minor pentatonic scales

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Music Theory

Pentatonic Scales

Minor pentatonic scales

Minor pentatonic scales can just be thought of as a minor scale, minus scale degrees 2 and b6. Therefore a minor pentatonic scale has the formula 1 b3 4 5 b7.

```
C D Eb F G Ab Bb C - C minor scale
1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 1 - scale functions
```

Basic minor scale
functions indicated

```
|--2--|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----| -1st string
|-----|-b7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|-----|--4--|-----|--5--|-b6--|
|-----|--1--|-----|--2--|-b3--| -4th string
```

```
C Eb F G Bb C - C minor pentatonic
1 b3 4 5 b7 1 - scale functions
```

Basic minor pentatonic scale
functions indicated

```
|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----| -1st string
|-b7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|--4--|-----|--5--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|-b3--| -4th string
```

For a reference page with all minor pentatonic scale forms click the button below.

A minor pentatonic scale forms

Page 2, Major pentatonic scales

Page 4, Relative major and minor

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Music Theory

Pentatonic Scales

Relative major and minor

A C major pentatonic scale consists of the notes C D E G A C. An A minor pentatonic scale is the same notes, just in a different order....A C D E G A. The relationship between these 2 scales is called "relative". Just think....same blood....same notes. They are relatives of each other. Whether you call these same notes a major pentatonic or minor pentatonic just depends on how they are being used.

A is the relative minor of C major, and C is the relative major of A minor.

Below you will see a basic pentatonic scale form. First it is shown as an A minor pentatonic scale with the root **A** represented in **red**. Then below that you see the same scale form, but this time it is represented as a C major pentatonic with the root **C** in **blue**.

Basic A minor pentatonic scale
Note Names

```
|--C--|-----|--D--|-----| -1st
|--G--|-----|--A--|-----|
|--D--|-----|--E--|-----|
|--A--|-----|-----|--C--| -4th
   |
  5th fret
```

Basic A minor pentatonic scale
Scale Functions

```
|-b3--|-----|--4--|-----| -1st
|-b7--|-----|--1--|-----|
|--4--|-----|--5--|-----|
|--1--|-----|-----|-b3--| -6th
   |
  5th fret
```

Basic C major pentatonic scale
Note Names

```
|--C--|-----|--D--|-----| -1st
|--G--|-----|--A--|-----|
|--D--|-----|--E--|-----|
|--A--|-----|-----|--C--| -4th
   |
  5th fret
```

Basic C major pentatonic scale
Scale Functions

```
|--1--|-----|--2--|-----| -1st
|--5--|-----|--6--|-----|
|--2--|-----|--3--|-----|
|--6--|-----|-----|--1--| -4th
   |
  5th fret
```

So as you learn to play various pentatonic scale forms, it is going to be important to learn where the roots are within a particular form. And since the same fingering can be thought of as major pentatonic, or minor pentatonic, there are 2 sets of roots to learn for each scale fingering.

One for major, and one for minor.

For a reference page with all pentatonic scale forms with the roots for both major and minor highlighted, click the button below.

Pentatonic scale forms with roots highlighted

Page 3, Minor pentatonic scales

Page 1, Major and minor scale review

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August 12th, 2002

New site added in the Music News & Reference Info link section.

- AlternativeReview.com - For true fans of the alternative music genre. Bands, Reviews, New music, and more.

August 11th, 2002

New site added in the Bass and Music Instruction link section.

- TheoryLessons.com - Guitar lessons in music theory for the guitar or bass player. Learn and play guitar scales and chords in your own home any time, taught by a professional musician.

July 30th, 2002

Reading standard notation - Notes on the 1st string

May 2nd, 2002

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TeachMeBass.com - Free online bass lessons for beginer to advanced players.

April 23rd, 2002

New featured link

- **Bass-Guitar-Review.com** - Your place for the latest bass guitar gear news, reviews and articles! Featuring monthly contests and giveaways!

March 24th, 2002

Blues scale forms - Learn all 5 positions of the blues scale, and the common extended forms. The basic theory behind a blues scale is also explained in this lesson.

March 20th, 2002

New featured link

- Onomatopea - Great sounding new project from bassist Andrea Pietropaolo and vocalist Delia Lyn. The site includes realplayer audio samples of all of the tracks from their new CD release.

New site added to the Instruction page in the links section.

- Bass Boulevard - A resource site for bassists including Scales, Modes, Exercises, Bass Links

January 18th, 2002

New Tablature Search - Search over 23,000 different tabs, or browse through the database by band or artist.

January 6th, 2002

Reading standard notation - Notes on the 2nd string

December 10th, 2001

Theory - Modes 101 - Learn how modes are constructed, and how they are used as both a tonal center, and as scales for particular chords.

November 2nd, 2001

New site added to the Ear Training section.

- Big Ears - Online interval ear training

November 1st, 2001

Major scale forms - 5 basic major scale forms that will let you cover the entire neck of the bass.

September 25th, 2001

New site added to the Software page in the links section.

- MusEdit - Inexpensive yet powerful notation software for guitar/bass tablature, treble/bass/drum notation, chord diagrams, and more. Free demo

July 24th, 2001

Root - 5th bass lines - Add this very fundamental tool to your bass line creation toolbox.

June 18th, 2001

Theory - Pentatonic Scales - Learn the construction of both major and minor pentatonic scales. A reference of all pentatonic scale forms and functions is included.

June 8th, 2001

Natural Harmonics - Produce "bell like" tones on the bass.

June 3rd, 2001

New site added to the Bass Players and Bands page in the links section.

- Gonzo Bass - Solo bass act, sideman, instructor, studio musician. With influences like Beethoven, Steve Vai, Stanley Jordan, Miles Davis and Jaco.

New site added to the General Music page in the links

section.

- Gomus.com - music websites directory featuring links to guitar lessons and sites as well as everything from mp3 sites to internet radio sites

May 25th, 2001

New site added to the General Music page in the links section.

- 8notes.com - Free sheetmusic, popular jazz and tv riffs explained. Music lessons and much more for guitar and other instruments.

May 19th, 2001

New site added to the General Music page in the links section.

- MusicianForums.com - An interactive message board where guitarists,bassists,and drummers can learn about their instrument and discuss music.

May 15th, 2001

Roger Waters Riff - Get some money and learn this classic Pink Floyd bass groove in 7/4 time.

May 14th, 2001

New site added on the General Bass page of the links section.

- BassSick.com - Where bass players chat music, notation, tab, midi, gigs, lessons, links and more.

May 13th, 2001

New site added on the General Bass page of the links section.

- Bottom Feeder - Bass player interviews, tablature, links, pictures...

May 10th, 2001

Site search is up.

May 9th, 2001

New site added on the General Bass page of the links section.

- PlayTheBass.com - free staff paper, flash cards, desktop pictures/screen savers, posters, web links database, lessons, and more.

May 3rd, 2001

New site added on the Tablature section.

- Riff-Raff - Index to 1000s of free guitar, bass and drum tabulatures.

New site added on the General Bass page of the links section.

- BASSically.net - Featured artists, lessons, news & reviews, and bass related links.

May 2nd, 2001

New site added on the General Bass page of the links section.

- TalkBass.com - Community based site with over 15,000 active members. Large tablature archive and bass link section.

- BassCommunity.net - bass info, articles, forums, chat, search engine, bass links

May 1st, 2001

CyberfretBass.com Launchs! Stay tuned for more lessons and features to help you on your bass playing journey.

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Guitar Links

Cyberfret.com - Free online guitar lessons using audio and video. This site also features a tablature section and links to many guitar and music resources.

Music X Tabs - Your ultimate source for Guitar tabs, with over 23,000 guitar, bass and drum tabs. Updated daily.

AccessRock.com - Access Rock is an interactive rock guitar site with artist interviews, chat's biweekly, gear giveaways, expert help, and lessons which cover almost every rock technique you can think of!

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Music News & Reference Info

AlternativeReview.com - For true fans of the alternative music genre. Bands, Reviews, New music, and more.

History of Music - a Guide to Western Composers and their Music from the Middle Ages to the Present

All-Music Guide - a large online reference or artists and recordings.

Ultimate Band List

CREATIVEMUSIC.COM Online Dictionary

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Bass and Music Instruction

TheoryLessons.com - Guitar lessons in music theory for the guitar or bass player. Learn and play guitar scales and chords in your own home any time, taught by a professional musician.

TeachMeBass.com - Free online bass lessons for beginer to advanced players.

rockbass-beginnertoproinfourweeks.com - The name says it all. Instructionware.

Bass Boulevard - A resource site for bassists including Scales, Modes, Exercises, Bass Links

Bass101.com - Online Bass player Community featuring online Bass lessons, Bass scales, interactive forums, chat rooms, members can add to the resources by posting bass related lessons and articles

ActiveBass.com - Everything for the bass guitarist: free interactive lessons with tablature and MIDI playback, tab search, jam tracks, gear reviews, forums, scales

The Libster - There are lots of lessons and bass transcriptions, bass oriented sound files, playing tips, links and lots of other goodies to be found here.

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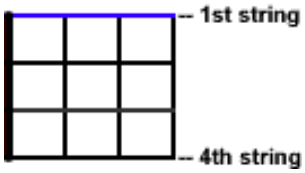
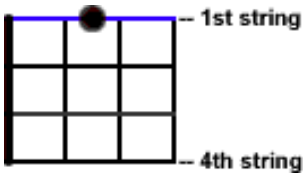
Reading Music

Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 1st String



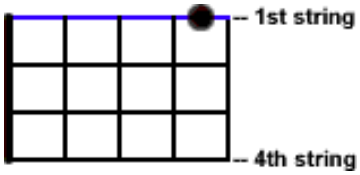
G

2nd string open



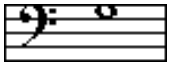
A

2nd string, 2nd fret

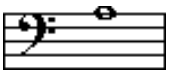


B

2nd string, 3rd fret



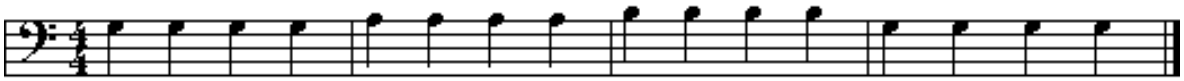
open



2nd finger

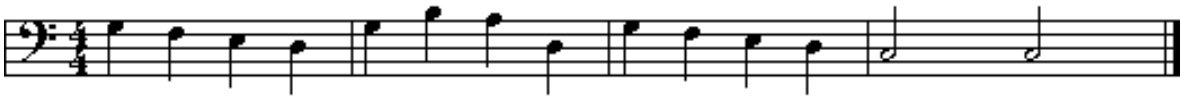
4th finger

1st string - Exercise #1



Pick a speed get crescendo MIDI player

1st string - Exercise #2



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Notes on the 2nd string

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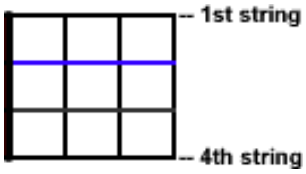
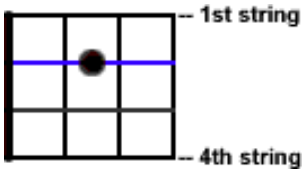


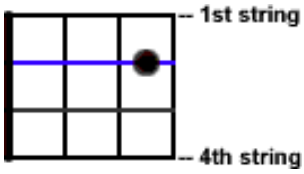
D

2nd string open



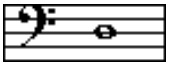
E

2nd string, 2nd fret

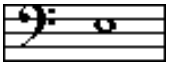


F

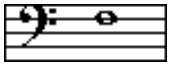
2nd string, 3rd fret



open

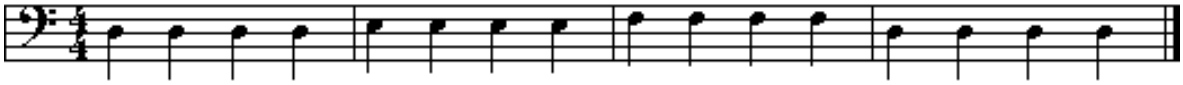


2nd finger



3rd finger

2nd string - Exercise #1



Pick a speed

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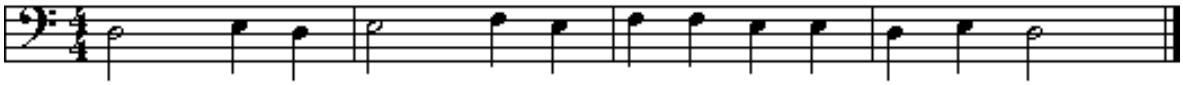
2nd string - Exercise #2



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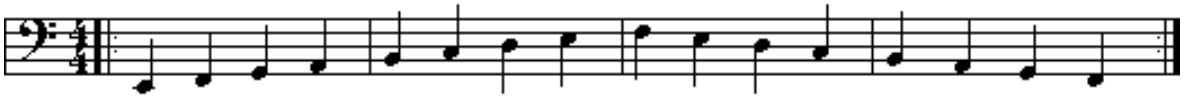
get crescendo MIDI player

2nd string - Exercise #3



Pick a speed

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Notes on the 3rd string

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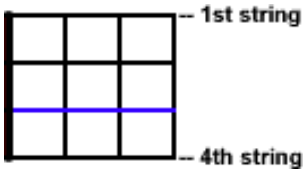
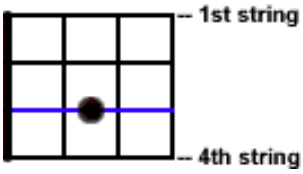


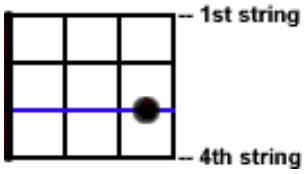
A

3rd string open



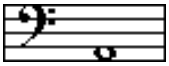
B

3rd string, 2nd fret

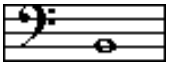


C

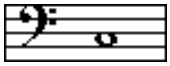
3rd string, 3rd fret



open

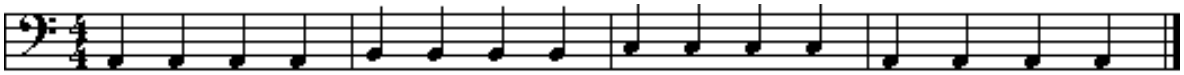


2nd finger



3rd finger

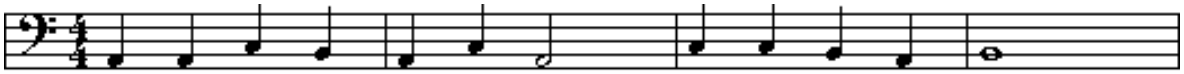
3rd string - Exercise #1

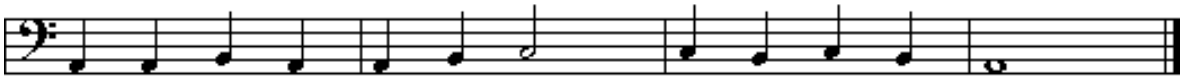


Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

3rd string - Exercise #2

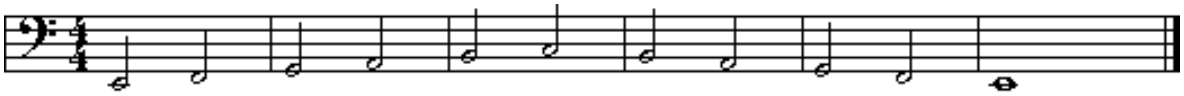




Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

3rd string - Exercise #3



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

Notes on the 4th string

Page 2, Notes on the 3rd string

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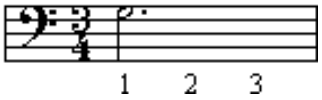
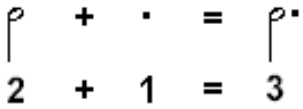
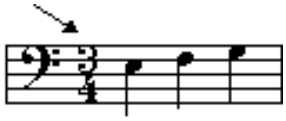
Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 4th String

Dotted Half notes receive 3 beats



A **dot** placed after a note will increase it's value by half the original.





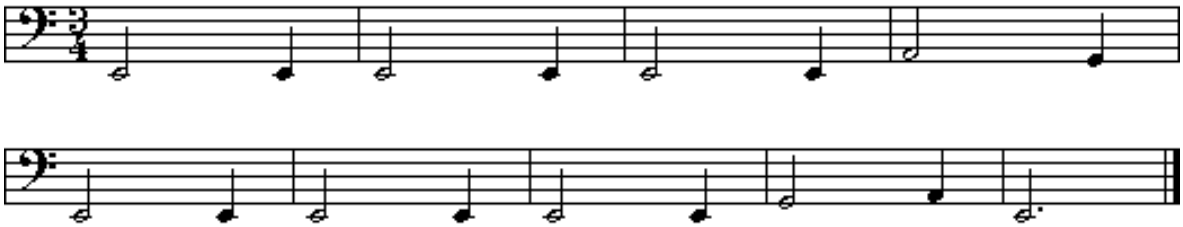
A **time signature** consists of two numbers placed at the beginning of a piece of music.

The top number tells you how many beats are in each measure.

The bottom number will tell you which rhythm gets one beat. (The 4 stands for the quarter note getting one beat)

In the beginning the only numbers you will see in the top are 3 or 4. In the bottom you will only see a 4 at this point.

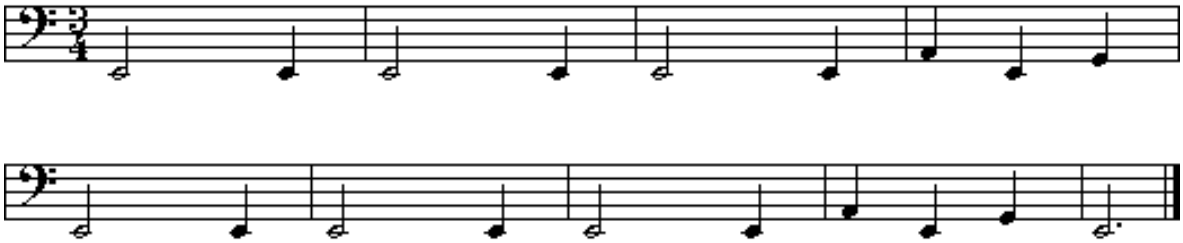
4th string - Exercise #7



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

4th string - Exercise #8



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

Page 2, Notes on the 4th string

Notes on the 3rd string

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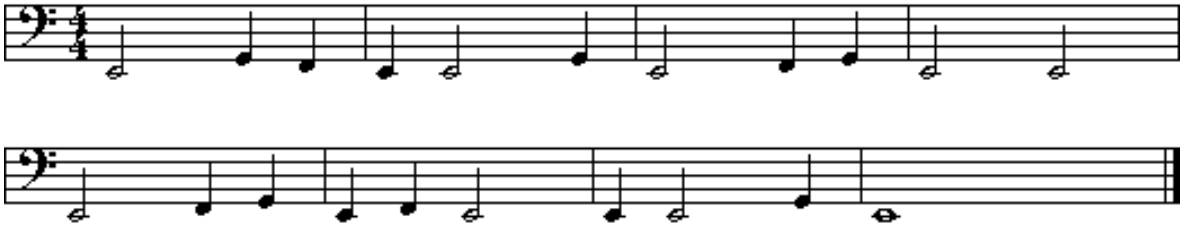
Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 4th String

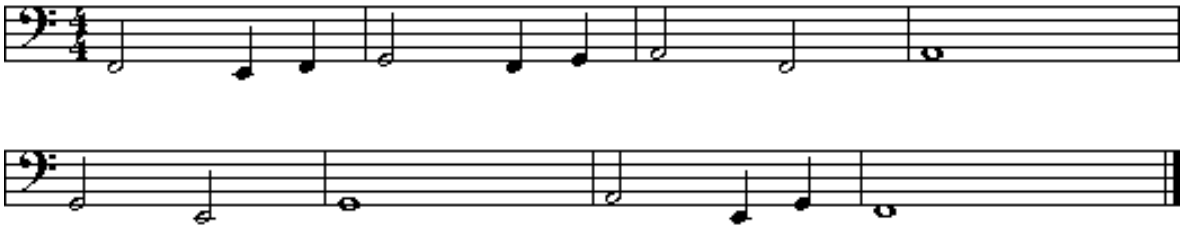
4th string - Exercise #4



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

4th string - Exercise #5



Pick a speed

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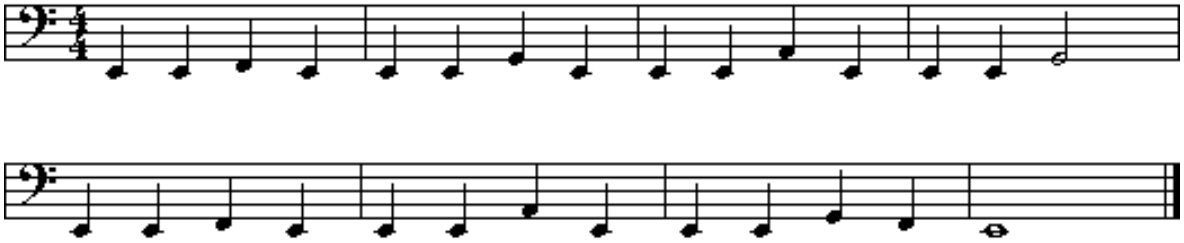
4th string - Exercise #6



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Page 1, Notes on the 4th string

Page 3, Notes on the 4th string

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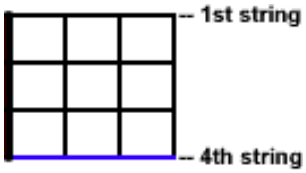
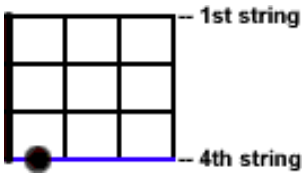


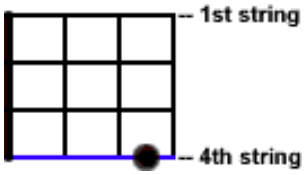
E

4th string open



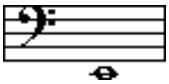
F

4th string, 1st fret

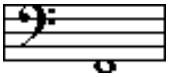


G

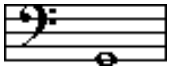
4th string, 3rd fret



open

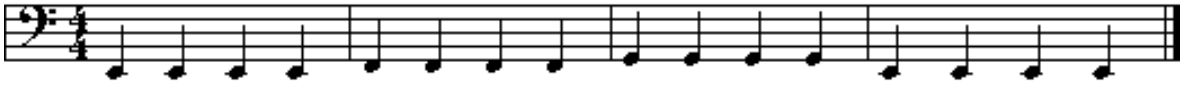


1st finger



3rd finger

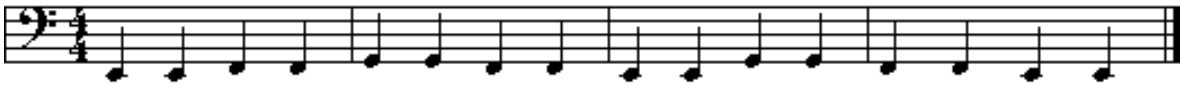
4th string - Exercise #1



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

4th string - Exercise #2



Pick a speed

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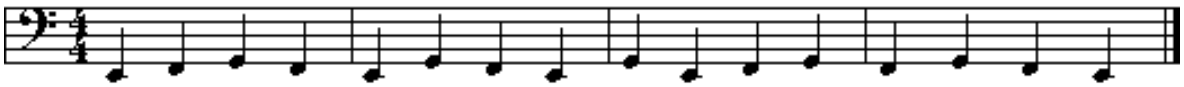
4th string - Exercise #3



Pick a speed

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Notes on the open strings

Page 2, Notes on the 4th string

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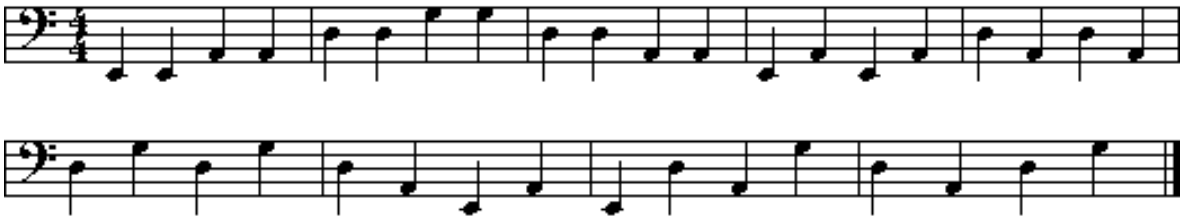
Exercise #3 - Quarter Notes



Pick a speed

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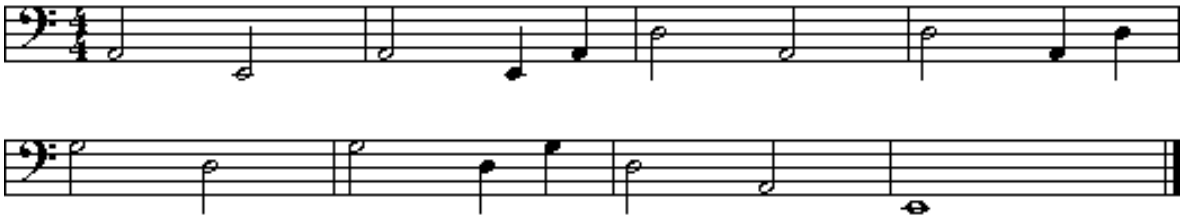
Exercise #4 - Mixed Up



Pick a speed

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Page 1, Notes on the open strings

Notes on the 4th string

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Electric Bass - Standard Notation - Open Strings

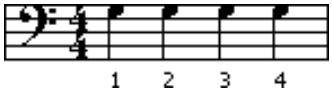
The open strings of the bass

E	A	D	G
4th string open	3rd string open	2nd string open	1st string open

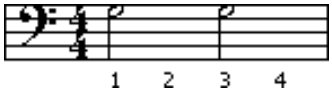
*Note that E uses an extension of the staff called a ledger line.

Reading basic rhythms

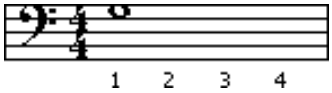
Quarter notes receive 1 beat



Half notes receive 2 beats

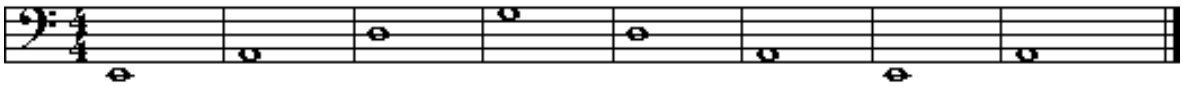


Whole notes receive 4 beats



Think of rhythms as proportions. The half note is held for 2 times as long as a quarter note, and a whole note is held for 2 times as long as a half note.

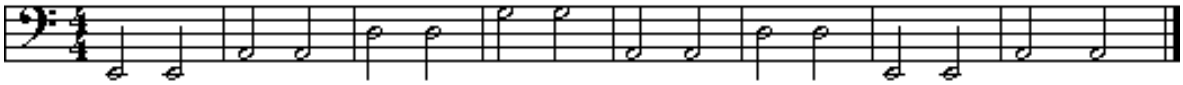
Exercise #1 - Whole Notes



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

Exercise #2 - Half Notes



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Page 2, Notes on the open strings

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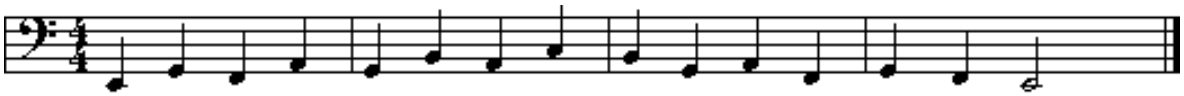
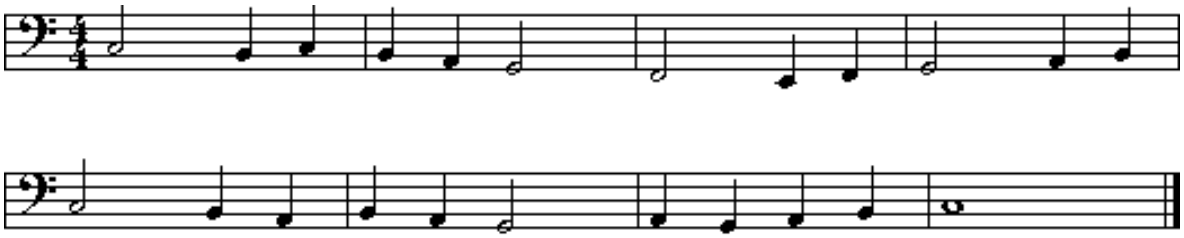
Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 3rd String

3rd string - Exercise #4



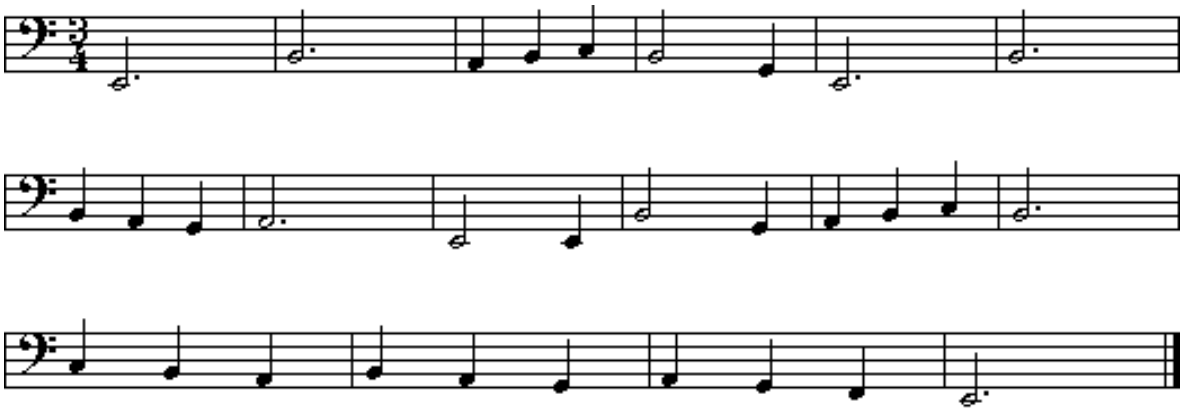
Pick a speed get crescendo MIDI player

3rd string - Exercise #5



Pick a speed get crescendo MIDI player

3rd string - Exercise #6



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

Page 1, Notes on the 3rd string

Page 3, Notes on the 3rd string

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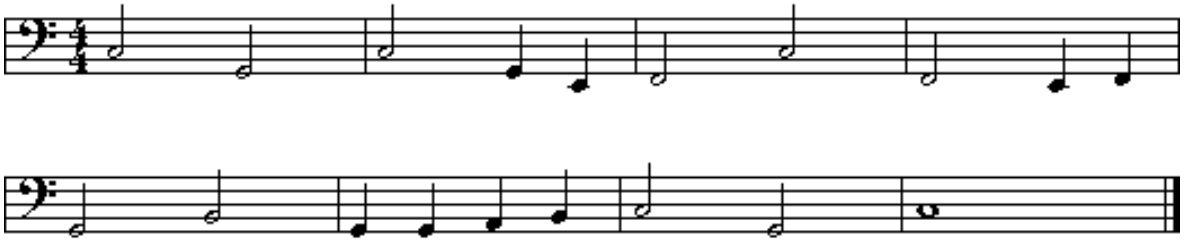
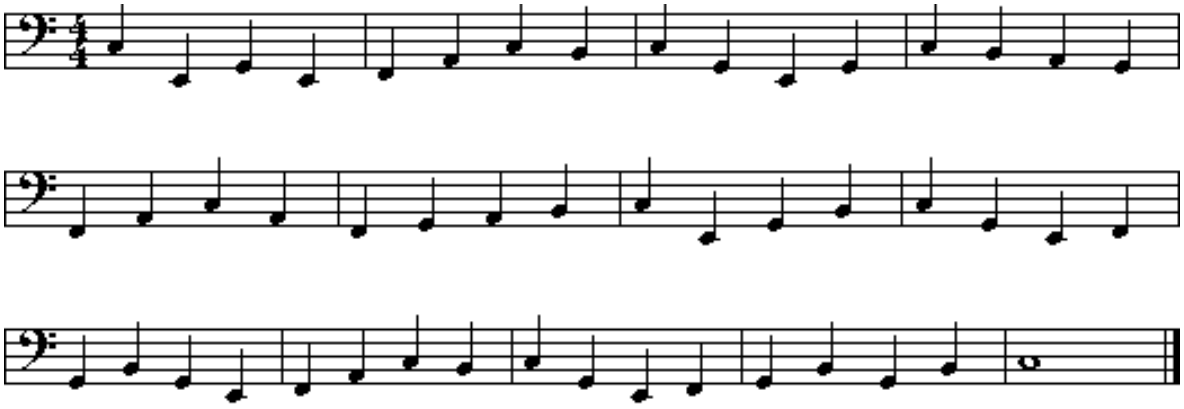
3rd string - Exercise #7



Pick a speed

get crescendo MIDI player

3rd string - Exercise #8



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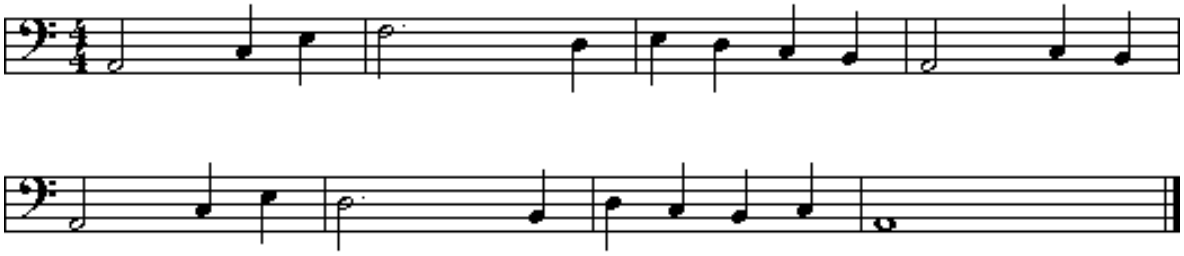
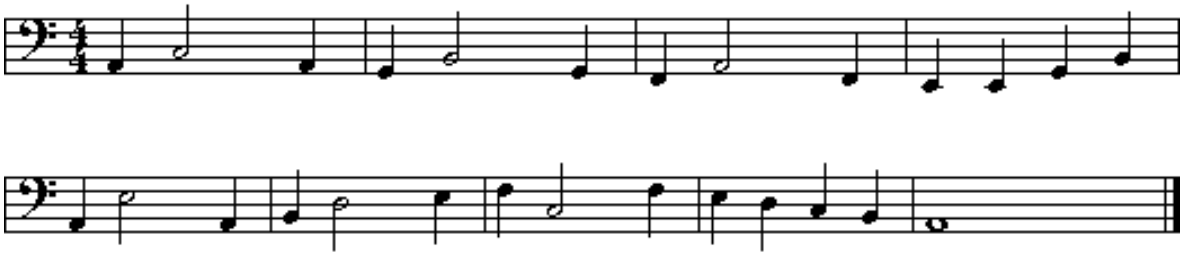
Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 2nd String

2nd string - Exercise #4



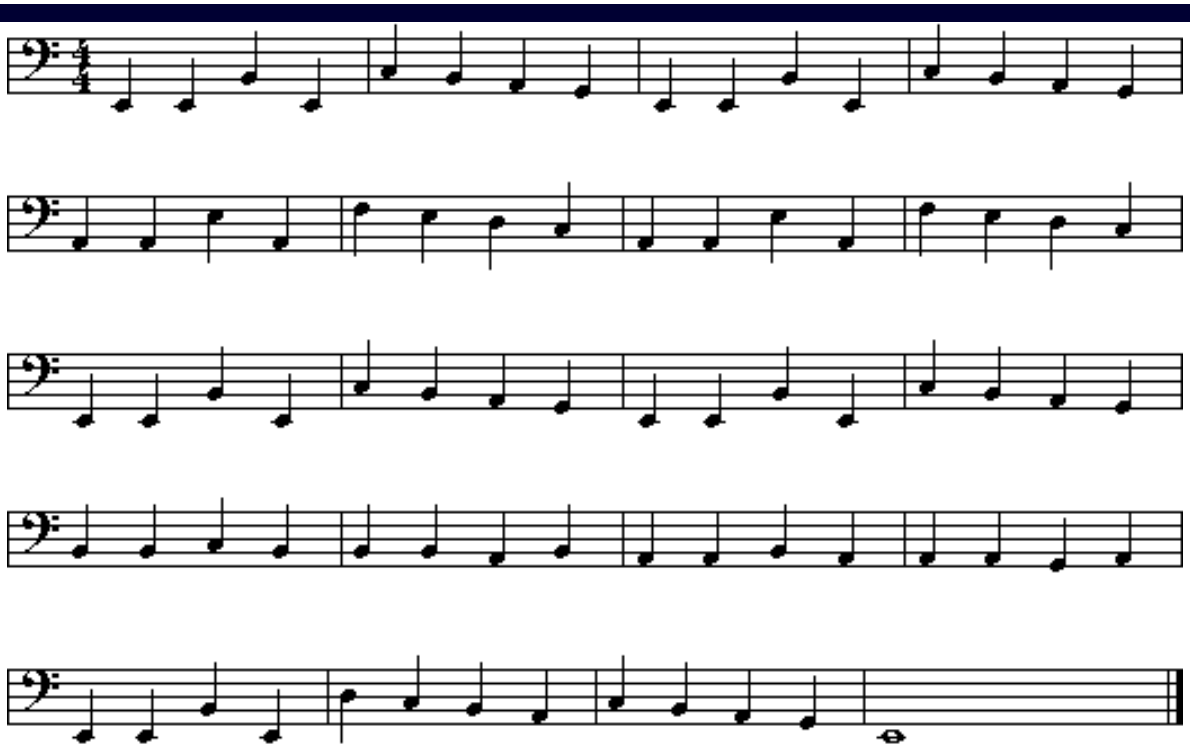
Pick a speed get crescendo MIDI player

2nd string - Exercise #5



Pick a speed get crescendo MIDI player

2nd string - Exercise #6



Pick a speed

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Page 1, Notes on the 2nd string

Page 3, Notes on the 2nd string

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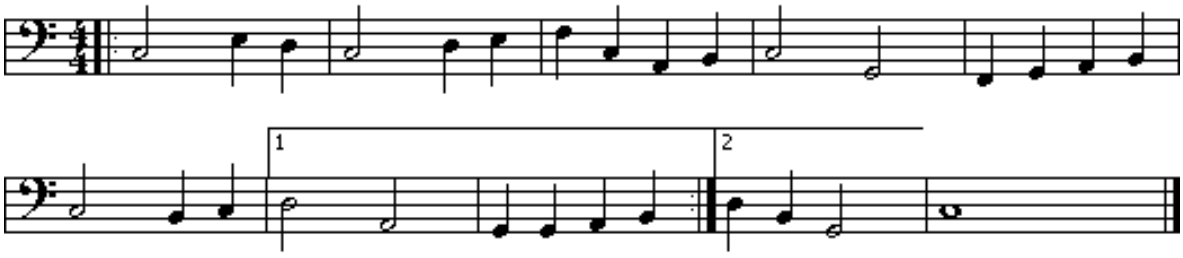
Reading Music

Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 2nd String

First and Second Endings are used when part of the previous music is repeated but has a different ending. At the finish of the first ending (the measures under the bracket with a 1) there is a repeat sign at which you will return to either the beginning of the piece or to a repeat sign that faces the other direction. The music is then played again, skipping the first ending and playing the second ending instead.

2nd string - Exercise #7



Pick a speed

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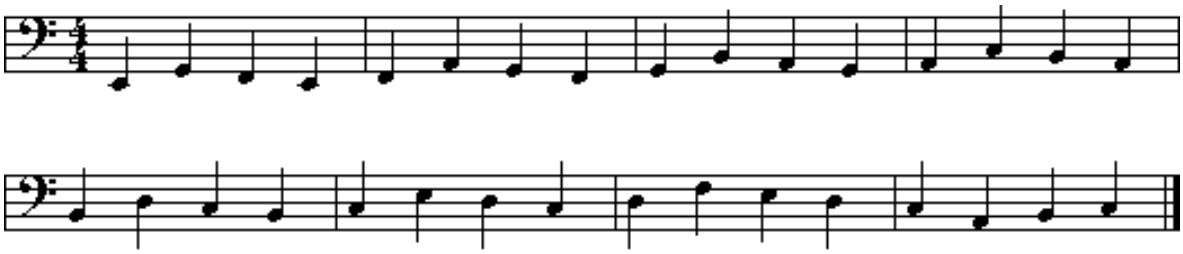
2nd string - Exercise #8



Pick a speed

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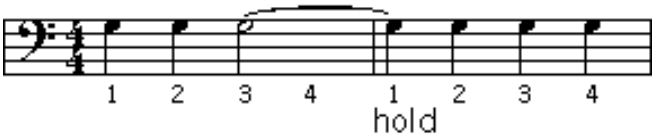
Reading Music

Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 2nd String

Pickup notes are notes that lead into the first full measure of a song. They are counted like the end of a normal measure. The other beats that are missing are sometimes found in the last measure of the piece. If you count the number of beats in the first and last measure, together they equal one complete measure.

A **Tie** is a curved line that connects two notes of the same pitch. The note is held for the value of both rhythms added together. (The second note is not played) In this example a half note is tied to a quarter note, equaling a value of 3 beats. The reason that a dotted half note is not used here is because you can't have more that 4 beats in a measure in 4/4 time, so you have to split the 3 beats between 2 measures.



2nd string - When The Saints Go Marching In

Pick a speed

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Page 3, Notes on the 2nd string

Page 1, Notes on the 2nd string

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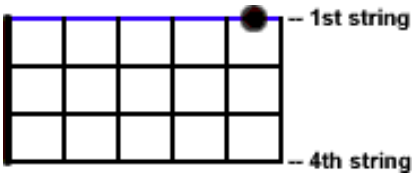
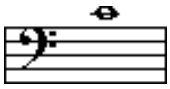
Electric Bass - Standard Notation - 1st String



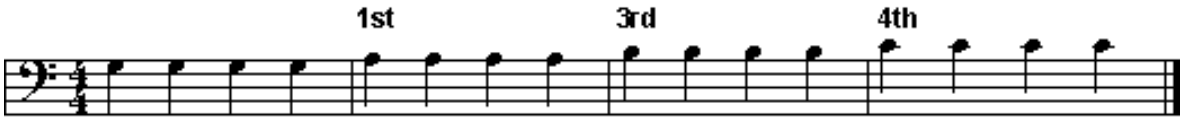
C

2nd string, 5th fret



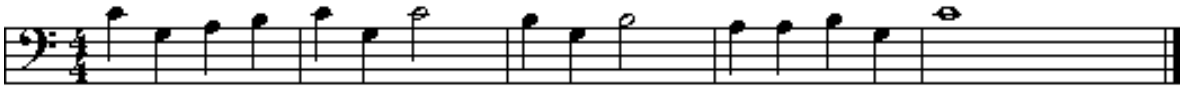
4th finger

1st string - Exercise #3



Pick a speed get crescendo MIDI player

1st string - Exercise #4



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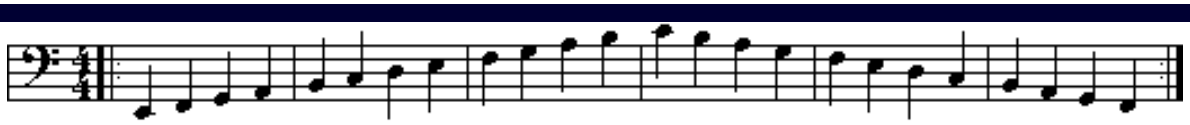
1st string - Exercise #5



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Chordware - Generates custom chord lists from a library of 1200 chords given user input chords and other options. Free Demo.

MusEdit - Inexpensive yet powerful notation software for guitar/bass tablature, treble/bass/drum notation, chord diagrams, and more. Free demo

Tabs Lyrics Chords - A tablature editor/database that transposes, has 1400+ chords, 60+ guitar scales in any key, any style tab frame, digital recorder, powerful search + more all on free-form text!

Shareware Music Machine - Your music software download site with a huge collection of well over 2000 music software programs listed. We have detailed descriptions and discussion forums for each program listed.

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Onomatopea - Great sounding new project from bassist Andrea Pietropaolo and vocalist Delia Lyn. The site includes realplayer audio samples of all of the tracks from their new CD release.

Bryan Beller - Bassists with Mike Kenealy and Beer for Dolphins

Gonzo Bass - Solo bass act, sideman, instructor, studio musician. With influences like Beethoven, Steve Vai, Stanley Jordan, Miles Davis and Jaco.

ENCYCLOPEDIA METALLICA - Large collection of Metallica stuff, quiz w/ prizes, updated daily.

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8notes.com - Free sheetmusic, popular jazz and tv riffs explained. Music lessons and much more for guitar and other instruments.

MusicianForums.com - An interactive message board where guitarists,bassists,and drummers can learn about their instrument and discuss music.

Harmony Central - The leading Internet resource for musicians, supplying valuable information from news and product reviews, to classified ads and chat rooms

CleverJoe's Musician Resource - A popular musician resource centre for the Canadian and International music industry. Band resources, new and used music gear, supplier links, music publications and more.

The Music Spot - A band directory and music news site that caters toward the music community and features links to band clubs, newslettters and mailing lists

KindWeb - Music Resources and Other Kind Things - Music Resources, Band Links, Events Calendar, Venues Finder, Activism, Natural Health Information, a Great Search Engine, and much more...

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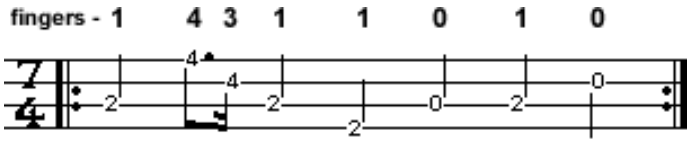
Grooves & Moves

Roger Waters

This is the classic bass groove from the song "Money" by bassist Roger Waters of Pink Floyd. It is an easy, yet very distinctive and recognizable bass part.



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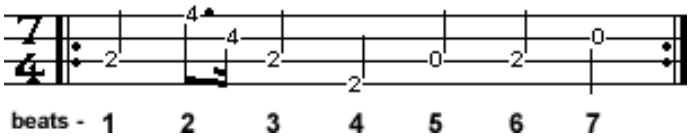
One unique thing about this bass groove, is that it is in an odd time signature. It is in 7/4 time. That means that there are 7 beats in a measure, with the quarter note getting 1 beat.

7 - 7 beats per measure
4 - the quarter note gets one beat

Here is the the tablature showing the 7 beats.



The underlying chord that is being played by the guitar player is a Bm7 (B minor 7). This entire bass line comes from a Bm7 arpeggio.

Below is a Bm7 Arpeggio. The numbers in red are Bs, the root or the chord.

Bm7 Arpeggio

```
|-1-|---|-3-|---| -1st string
|---|---|-3-|---|
|-1-|---|---|-4-|
|-1-|---|---|-4-| -4th string
  |
2nd fret
```

If you were to play this bass groove using the arpeggio fingering above, it would look like the tablature below. Then you could transpose this groove to any key by just moving it up and down the neck.

```
------4-------------------------------
---------4----------------------------
---2---------2------------2---5------
------------------2---5--------------
```

Here you are replacing the 4th string 5th fret with the open 2nd string, and the 3rd string 5th fret with the open 2nd string.

Bm7 Arpeggio

using open strings

```
 ||---|-1-|---|-3-|---| -1st string
0||---|---|---|-3-|---|
0||---|-1-|---|---|-4-|
 ||---|-1-|---|---|-4-| -4th string
        |
    2nd fret

 ||---|-1-|---|-3-| -1st string
0||---|---|---|-3-|
0||---|-1-|---|---|
 ||---|-1-|---|---| -4th string
        |
    2nd fret
```

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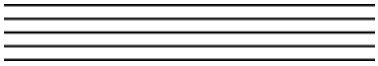
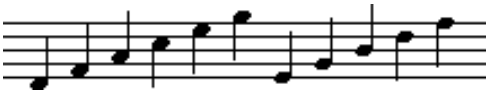
Reading Music

Electric Bass - Standard Notation - Primer

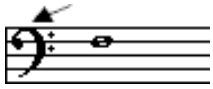
Music is written on what is called a staff, which consists of 5 lines and the 4 spaces between those lines.



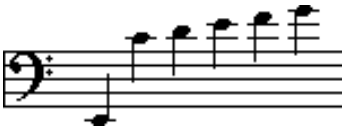
Notes are written either on the line or in a space.



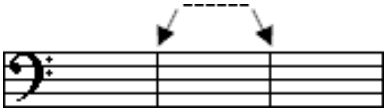
Music for bass is written in what is called ***bass clef***. It is also sometimes referred to as ***F clef***. This is because the symbol itself looks like the letter F, and also the 2 dots in the clef surround the F note on the staff.



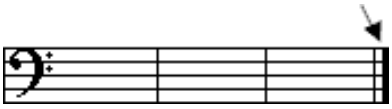
Notes that are outside of the range of the staff's lines and spaces use and extension of the staff called a ***ledger line***.



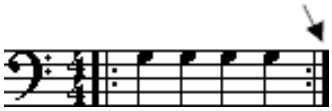
Music is divided into sections called measures by vertical lines called bar lines.



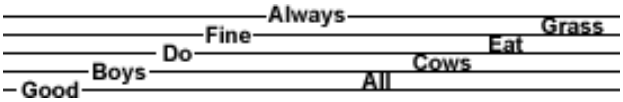
A final double bar line is used indicates the end of a piece of music.



A repeat sign is used to play a section of music again. (Looks the same as a final double bar line only with 2 dots.)



Here are the dumb little sayings to remember the names of the notes on the staff. The lines are **G**ood, **B**oys, **D**o, **F**ine, **A**lways, and the spaces are **A**ll, **C**ows, **E**at, **G**rass. Avoid it as much as possible.



Reading the notes on the open strings of the bass

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Arpeggios

Basic major and minor arpeggios for electric bass

What we are going to take a look at in this lesson are the most basic forms of major and minor arpeggios. There will be a lesson that covers major and minor arpeggios in a more complete manner, so this is just a starting point for your arpeggio exploration. Arpeggios are important not only for developing your technique, but your ear as well. Arpeggios will be very important as you are learning to create bass lines over chord changes.

One important word to understand in this lesson, and in music overall is ***root***. The root is the primary note that a chord or arpeggio is named after (A is the root of the chords Am, A7, A5, etc.)

Arpeggios are just the notes of a chord played one note at a time.

Basic Major Arpeggios

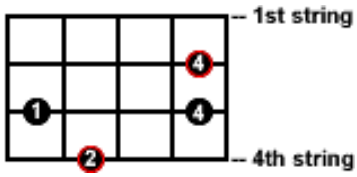
The first arpeggio we are going to look at has it's root on the 4th string. So the name of the arpeggio will come from the name of the note that you put your 2nd finger on to start. You are then going to play the notes from the lowest sounding, to the highest and back down. Next to the picture of the arpeggio, you will see an example of the arpeggio in tablature format, and a video to give you an idea of the sound and how it looks when played.

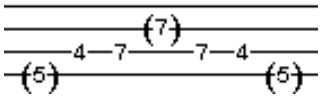
● = the root note

There are only 3 different notes in a major or minor arpeggio before the names of the notes start over. So you will notice that there is a root indicated on the 2nd string of a major arpeggio root on the 4th string. When we say that an arpeggio has the root on the 4th string, that does not mean that the 4th string is the only place you will find the root. It only means that the lowest root that particular arpeggio form is on the 4th string. That root will be your guide when playing the arpeggio on different frets.

Of course for these arpeggios to be of any use, you will need to know what the names of the notes on the neck of the bass are. Especially the 3rd and 4th strings to start with.

Root on the 4th string





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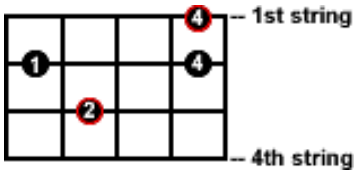
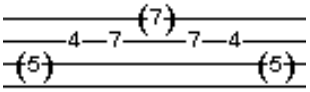
Root on the 3rd string

This is the same shape, just move up a set of strings.





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Page 2, Extending the basic major arpeggios

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Arpeggios

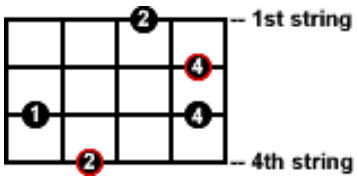
Basic major and minor arpeggios for electric bass

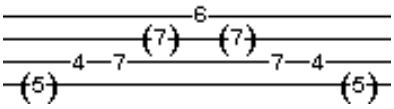
Basic Major Arpeggios

Extending the range

These arpeggio shapes cover the full range of the position that they are it. All you are doing is adding a note to the basic position that you learn on the previous page.

Root on the 4th string





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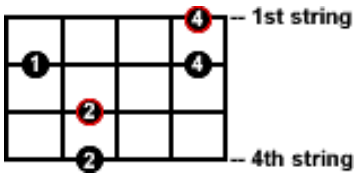
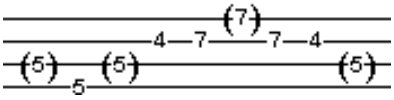
Root on the 3rd string

When you play the root on the 3rd string arpeggio, you are going to start on the root...go down to the 4th string...work your way up to the 1st string...and come back down to end on the root on the 3rd string. This way you will develop your ear to hear all of the notes in relationship to the root.





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Page 1, Basic major arpeggios

Page 3, Basic minor arpeggios

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Arpeggios

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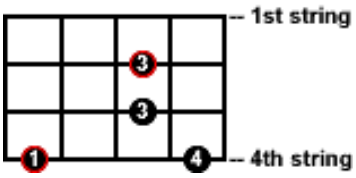
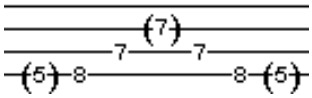
Basic Minor Arpeggios

Root on the 4th string





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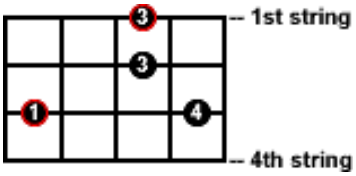
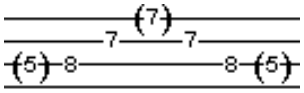
Root on the 3rd string





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Page 2, Extending the basic major arpeggios

Page 4, Extending the basic minor arpeggios

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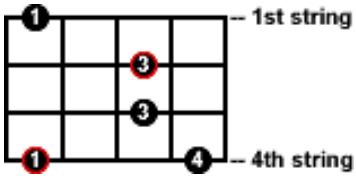
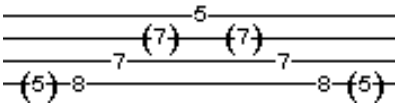
Basic Minor Arpeggios

Extending the range

Root on the 4th string





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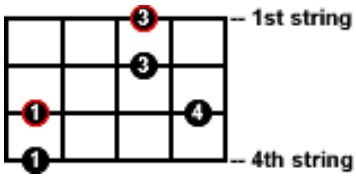
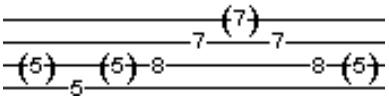
Root on the 3rd string





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Page 3, Basic minor arpeggios

Page 1, Basic major arpeggios

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Bass Line Creation

Playing the roots, step one in bass line creation

The first step to learning how to develop a bass line, is to simply play the roots of the chords. Everything else is just icing on the cake. So then it just boils down to where to play the root on the neck of the bass, and what rhythms to play.

What are chords? Chords are more that one note played at a time. You could play chords on the bass, but for the most part they will sound too muddy to be of any use. If you are playing in a band, then the guitarist or keyboard player will be playing the chords. There are a lot of different chords, and it is beyond the scope of this lessons to go into them in too much detail, but what you need to be concerned with right now is what the root of a chord is. A C chord, a Cm (C minor), a C7....the root of all of these chords is C. The root is the basic note that the chord is named after. The other parts of the chord name, like the m, or the 7, just give information about what other notes are in the chord. Later on this will be very important, but for now you will play the same thing for all of these chords.....C.

One very important bit of information that you should master as a bass player, is what all of the names of the notes on the neck are. There is no way to play the root of a chord if your don't know where it is. Goal #1 should be to learn the notes on the 4th and 3rd string. You are going to use the notes on these 2 strings as an anchor when first learning to play the bass.

Be sure to check out the lesson on learning the names of the notes on the neck of the bass. This is a prerequisite to understanding this lesson.

Page 2, Where to play the roots, and what rhythms to use

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Bass Line Creation

Playing the roots, step one in bass line creation

Where to play

When trying to make a decision of where to play the root on the neck of the bass, keep these things in mind.

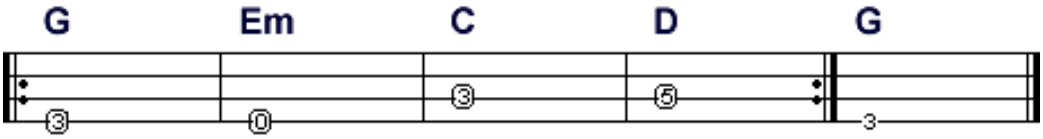
- What sound are you looking for. For instance, even though you could play and E note on the open 4th string, and play an E on the 7th fret of the 3rd string, they sound different. One is higher, and one is lower.
- You will also make the decision based on what the last note was, and what the next note is. You don't want to have to jump up and down the neck if all of the note could be play in the same position.

What rhythms to play

Now you know what the names of the notes on at least the 3rd and 4th strings are. So the next step is to decide what rhythms to play. Before you start playing anything too complex, you may just want to get your feet wet and play some simple rhythms, like whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes.

Play through the following chord progression doing just that. The first time through, just play whole notes (once on every chord). Next try playing half notes (2 times for every chord). And then quarter notes (4 times on every chord). This is just to get the feel of playing along with the band.

Whole notes



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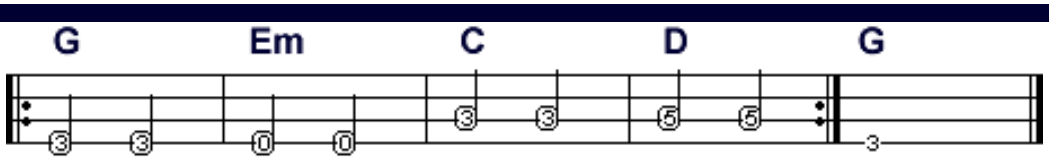
Half notes



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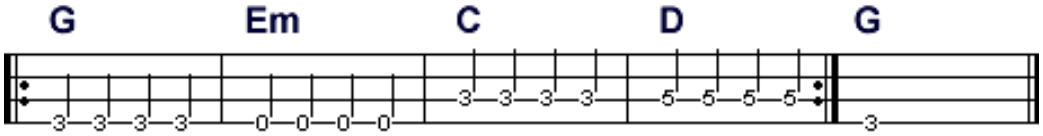
Quarter notes



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Page 1, The basics

Page 3, Making up your own rhythms

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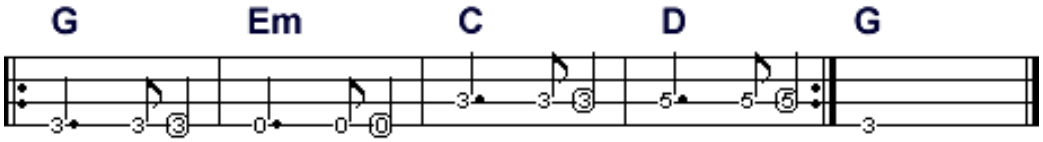
Bass Line Creation

Playing the roots, step one in bass line creation

Making up your own rhythms

Now you need to find some other rhythms to play along with this chord progression. The key is to listen to the drummer, especially to the rhythms being played on the bass drum. You don't have to play exactly what they are playing, but you are going to use that as your guide. You have to do some experimentation and find some rhythm that fit the feel of the song.

The example below follows the bass drum rhythmic pattern.



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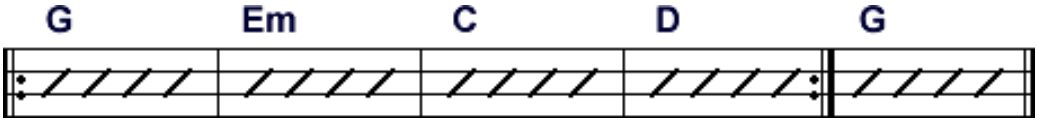
Now try and elaborate on this basic feel. Just jump in and give it a try.



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Now try the same chord progression, only played in some different styles. Each style will require different rhythms. Listen first, and then try and duplicate the feel of the band.

Pick a style

There are plenty of bass players (with recording contracts, and lots of money) that do not extend the sounds of the instrument beyond just playing the roots of the chords. Don't be one of them. Think of this as the first step and not the whole story.

Page 2, Where to play the roots, and what rhythms to use

Page 1, The basics

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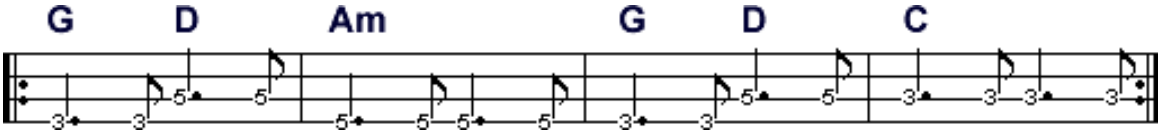
Bass Line Creation

Using chromatic approaches to create bass lines

Once you have a grasp of how to play a simple bass part using the roots of the chords, it is time to expand your palette of sounds.

First we are going to revisit a root only bass line, and then expand on it. The chord progression that we are going to use is from "Knockin' On Heavens Door". It is a Bob Dylan song, but has also been played by Eric Clapton, Guns n' Roses, as well as others.

First play through using just roots and the rhythms that are indicated.



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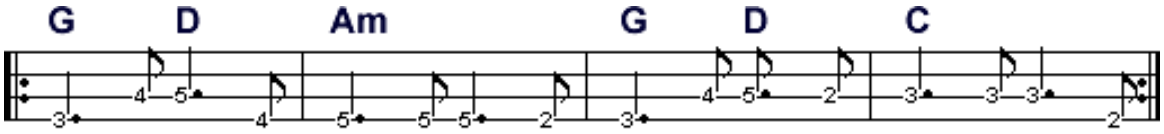
Approaching from a half step below

Now you are going to add a little color to that root bound bass line by approaching each root from a half step below. That means that on the last 8th note before the chord changes, you are going to play a note that is 1 fret below the root of the next chord. This creates a little tension, and a little more interest in your bass line.



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Now in real life, if you approach every root from a half step below, it is going to be overkill. So once you have the hang of approaching ever root, try to be a little more selective. Approach only a couple of chords each time through the progression.

The word chromatic means adjacent half steps. A chromatic scale contains only half step intervals going from any note to the same note an octave higher.

Page 2, Approaching from a half step above

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Bass Line Creation

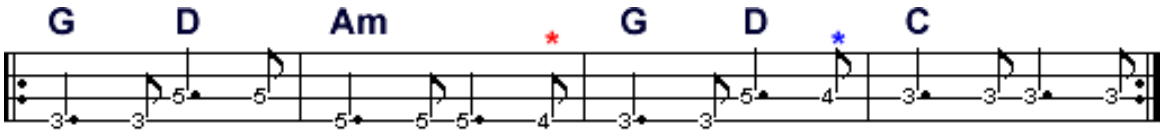
Using chromatic approaches to create bass lines

Approaching from a half step above

You could also approach the roots from a half step above. This is a stronger more tense sound, so use it with caution. In the example below I have approached only 2 chords from a half step above, and for the same reason in both instances.

*When going from the Am to the G chord, I am using a half step above the G chord. This creates a nice smooth movement between the 2 roots which are just a whole step apart. So I am just filling in the gap.

*Going from the D to the C chord also is also a great place for this half step above approach.



MIDI

get crescendo MIDI player

Other techniques that you will be using to create bass lines will require you to know the key that you are in. Or require the use of particular scales and arpeggios. But the chromatic approach is fair game anytime.

Page 1, Approaching from a half step below

Page 3, Double chromatic approaches

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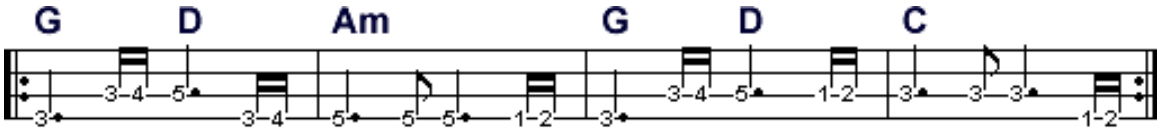
Bass Line Creation

Using chromatic approaches to create bass lines

Double Chromatic Approaches

You might also approach the root of the next chord from 2 half steps above or below. Here are a couple of examples of how this might be done with the chord progression to "Knockin' On Heavens Door".

2 half steps below



MIDI

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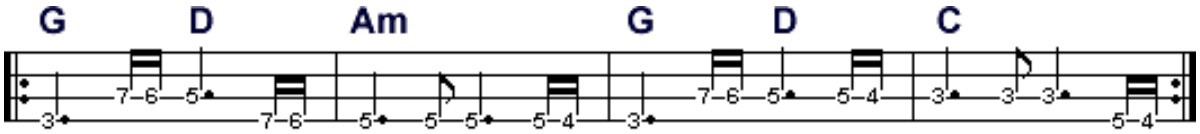
2 half steps above



MIDI

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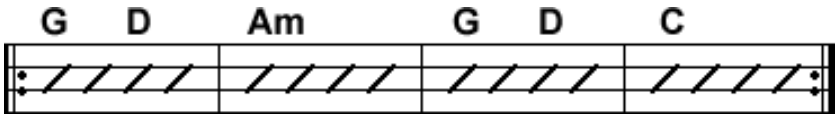
Most of the time, approaches are played with a faster rhythm. This is one of those over generalizations. But it is less common to have an approach note that is held for a long period of time. The ideas is to create some tension and motion which propels you into the next chord.

Now try to experiment with your own ideas on the same chord progression we have been using. At first, over due it a little. Use all kinds of chromatic approaches. Then pair it down a little. Try to make your decisions based on the sound you would like to hear, and not randomly.

Practice band



Pick a speed

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Page 2, Approaching from a half step above

Page 1, Approaching from a half step below

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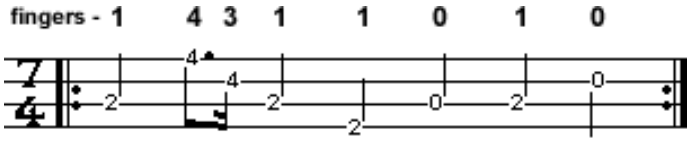
Grooves & Moves

Roger Waters

This is the classic bass groove from the song "Money" by bassist Roger Waters of Pink Floyd. It is an easy, yet very distinctive and recognizable bass part.



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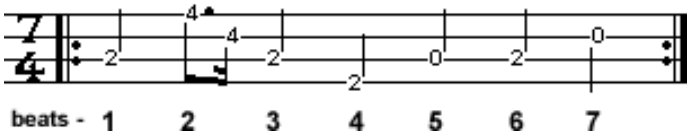
One unique thing about this bass groove, is that it is in an odd time signature. It is in 7/4 time. That means that there are 7 beats in a measure, with the quarter note getting 1 beat.

7 - 7 beats per measure
4 - the quarter note gets one beat

Here is the the tablature showing the 7 beats.



The underlying chord that is being played by the guitar player is a Bm7 (B minor 7). This entire bass line comes from a Bm7 arpeggio.

Below is a Bm7 Arpeggio. The numbers in red are Bs, the root or the chord.

Bm7 Arpeggio

```
|-1-|---|-3-|---| -1st string
|---|---|-3-|---|
|-1-|---|---|-4-|
|-1-|---|---|-4-| -4th string
  |
2nd fret
```

If you were to play this bass groove using the arpeggio fingering above, it would look like the tablature below. Then you could transpose this groove to any key by just moving it up and down the neck.

```
------4-------------------------------
---------4----------------------------
---2---------2------------2---5------
------------------2---5--------------
```

Here you are replacing the 4th string 5th fret with the open 2nd string, and the 3rd string 5th fret with the open 2nd string.

Bm7 Arpeggio

using open strings

```
 ||---|-1-|---|-3-|---| -1st string
0||---|---|---|-3-|---|
0||---|-1-|---|---|-4-|
 ||---|-1-|---|---|-4-| -4th string
        |
    2nd fret

 ||---|-1-|---|-3-| -1st string
0||---|---|---|-3-|
0||---|-1-|---|---|
 ||---|-1-|---|---| -4th string
        |
    2nd fret
```

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Grooves & Moves

Michael Anthony

Is the bass player's job always glamorous? Music isn't all about playing flashy parts. Sometimes a simple part is important to the overall feel of a song. Playing any more than that part would take away from the song, not add to it. So this is why we are looking at this groove from Van Halen bassist Michael Anthony.

This is the intro, and the chorus to the song "Running With The Devil".

```
                                C/E D/E             Em7 A/E E
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|--0--0--0--0---|-0--0--0--12\|-0--0--0--0--|-0--0--0--0--|

  C/E D/E             Em7 A/E E         C/E D/E             Em7 A/E E
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|--0--0--0--0---|-0--0--0--12\|-0--0--0--0--|-0--0--0--0--|

  C/E D/E             Em7 A/E E           A5
|---------------|--------------||------
|---------------|--------------||------
|---------------|--------------||------
|--0--0--0--0---|-0--0--0--2-3-||-5----
```

This bass part uses a very important concept that can be used in writing a bass part to a song. It is called a pedal point. The name comes from organ music, where foot pedals are used to play bass notes. For this particular technique, the organist would hold down a single bass pedal while playing chords and melodies above that one note. In the intro and chorus of this song, Eddie is playing some different guitar chords while Michael keeps a consistent E pedal note going. He does throw in a quick slide down from the 4th string 12th fret, which is also E.

The guitar chords are written above the tablature. You see C/E first. This is a C chord, with an E in the bass. All of the chord that you see have E as the bass note. C/E.... D/E... Em7... A/E... E. The only time in this whole section that you have a note other that E, is the last 2 notes before the verse. And those 2 notes just lead you into an A. Most of the verse of this song is just an A pedal note.

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Lessons on Bass Line Construction
Written by Steve Schmidt

Lesson #0 - Introduction
Lesson #1 - The Role of the Bassline
Lesson #2 - Beyond The Root Note
Lesson #3 - Chords and Bass Lines
Lesson #4 - Major Scales, Keys, Chord Changes, and the Circle of Fifths

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Lessons in Bass Line Construction

Steve Schmidt
schmidsj@unvax.union.edu

Lesson 0 - Preliminaries

This is the first in a series of lessons whose focus is on constructing bass lines. The main series of lessons presumes a small but nonzero amount of musical knowledge on the part of the listener; mostly some things about notes and time. It also presumes you know how to read TAB. This pre-lesson is designed to teach that knowledge to anyone who doesn't already have it.

If you know how to find a C# on your bass, know what a quarter note rest is, and can read TAB, then you can skip the rest of this and move on to Lesson 1. If not, or if the review will do you good, then read on!

A piece of music is composed of a series of notes. These notes are organized into sets of 12 notes called octaves, and each of these 12 notes has a name. If you sit down at a piano, you'll see that it has 88 keys, 52 white and 36 black, and that each of these keys produces a different note. The white keys all have one-letter names; the first one on the left (lowest note) is called A, the next one up is B, and so on. The seventh white key is called G, and the next white key, the eighth, is also called A; it begins the second octave. The ninth white key is B, the tenth C, and so on, until the 52nd and last white note, which is a C.

The black keys are named by their relation to the nearest two white keys, so each one has two names. First, they may be called "sharp", with the name of the white key below them: eg, the lowest black key is called A sharp, as it's immediately above A. There is no black key immediately above B; the second black note is C#, and so on up the keyboard. Second, black keys may also be called "flat", with the name of the white key above them: thus, the lowest black note can also be thought of as B flat, since it's immediately below the B. Similarly, the black key between D and E can be called either D sharp or E flat. For now, you can treat the two names as interchangable.

An octave runs from A to G#, 12 notes (7 white keys and 5 black keys) and then the names repeat for the next octave. Actually, the starting point doesn't matter: any 12 notes in a row (which will always contain 7 white keys and 5 black keys) are called an octave.

The strings of a bass are tuned to produce the 4 notes E, A, D, and G

(from thickest string to thinnest). Thus, if you play an E on the piano, and the open E string on your bass, you'll get the same note (if you choose the right octave on the piano, that is). Moving up one fret on the string produces the next highest note. That is, the open A string produces an A note (hence the name). Fingered at the first fret, it produces an A sharp, or B flat. Second fret produces a B. Third fret produces C (since there is no black key above B), fourth fret C sharp, and fifth fret produces D, the same note as the open D-string. And so on up the fingerboard. With this knowledge, you should be able to find two or three versions of each note on your bass. For example, you can get an F at the 1st fret of the E string, at the 3rd fret of the D string, at the 8th fret of the A string, and at the 10th fret of the G string. (The 3rd-D note and the 8th-A note are in the same octave: the 1st-E note is one octave below and the 10th-G note is

one octave above.) Make sure you can find any given note somewhere on your bass without too much effort, and that you know the names of the notes produced by playing a given string at a given fret, at least up to the 12th fret.

The next thing to mention is the way songs are arranged in time. Songs are divided into measures: a common song length is about 100 measures. Each measure is a certain number of beats long: in almost all modern music there are four beats to each measure, although other length measures are also used. Each note in the song has a given duration, and a note that lasts for four beats is called a whole note. A note that lasts for two beats is called a half note, and two half notes are the same length as one whole note. Similarly, there are quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. (In England these notes have different names. I'll be sticking to American usage throughout this lesson series.) Each quarter note receives one beat, and the quarter note is the basic building block of time and of rhythm. Eight eighth notes make up a four-beat measure, as you can see, as do four quarter notes and 16 sixteenth notes. Measures can contain notes of different lengths, so that a quarter note, a half note,and two eighth notes also make up one measure.

Other time durations can be written by "dotting" a note: in standard notation, one literally writes a dot next to the note. Dotting a note makes it last half again as long as it normally would. Thus, a quarter note lasts as long as two 8th notes: a dotted quarter note is 50% longer, so it lasts as long as three eighth notes. Thus, two quarter notes have the same length as a dotted quarter note and an eighth note. Similarly, a dotted half note lasts for the same amount of time as three quarter notes: a dotted half note and a quarter note together make up one measure.

The last thing to know is that rests, or times when the bass is not playing, are named the same way: thus, a whole rest means that the bass does not play for one measure. A quarter rest means that the bass does not play for one beat, and there are eighth rests and dotted half rests and so on.

One last note: in some jazz and classical music, a note other than the quarter note is given the one-beat length. Since almost all music is written with the quarter note getting one beat, I've assumed it is so throughout

the lesson series. However, if you get into more difficult music, you may run into music where the half-note or the eighth-note is one "beat" long. My advice is not to worry about this until it comes up.

The last thing you need to know is how to read TAB. Bass tabulature, or TAB for short, is a simple method for writing bass music. There are several different versions of tabulature, but the following features are common to almost all of them.

Bass tab is written on four-line staves. In text interfaces these are usually written using dashed characters. Each space corresponds to one string on the bass: the lowest space corresponds to the E string, the next lowest to the A string, the next to the D string, and the highest to the G string. A number on a given space represents a note played at the given fret on the corresponding string; thus, to indicate playing a G at the third fret on the E string, one would write:

```
G-----------------------------------
D-----------------------------------
A-----------------------------------
E----3------------------------------
```

Notes are played from the left of the staff to the right; thus, an ascending G major scale might be written:

```
G-----------------------------------
D-------------------2--4--5----------
A----------2--3--5-------------------
E----3--5----------------------------
```

Or, using open strings, it might be written like this:

```
G--------------------------0----------
D----------------0--2--4-------------
A-------0--2--3----------------------
E----3------------------------------
```

Chords can be written by writing two numbers in the same vertical bar. Thus one might write a simple A major chord as:

```
G-----9------------------------------
D-----11-----------------------------
A-----0------------------------------
E-----------------------------------
```

which means to play an open note on the A string, to play a C# at the 11th fret on the D string, and an E at the 9th fret on the G string.

Various fingering techniques can be noted in TAB as well. This is done by writing a single character after the note being fingered. The most common of

these are:

- h - hammer-on from previous note
- p - pull off from previous note
- \ - slide up to note
- b - bend note
- S - slap the note with the right-hand thumb (left hand if left-handed)
- P - pop the note with the right hand (ditto)
- t - tap the note with the right hand (ditto)
- H - harmonic

Thus a funky bass line might be written like this:

```
G---------5P-7h-5p-------------------
D-------------------------3b----------
A---0S\5-----------3S-5S----5S-5H---
E-------------------------------------
```

A muted note (one that is not fingered cleanly and makes a percussive sound rather than a clear tone) is written by placing an x on a line instead of a number:

```
G------------5--7--------------------
D-------------------------------------
A---5--x--x--------5--x--5-----------
E-------------------------------------
```

Similarly, a rest is indicated by writing an r on a line (any line will do):

```
G------------5--7--------------------
D-------------------------------------
A---5--r--r--------5--r--5-----------
E-------------------------------------
```

When it is not obvious which left-hand (right-hand to lefties) finger should be used to to fret a particular note, this may be indicated by writing a number under the note, with 1=index finger, 2=middle finger, 3=ring finger, 4=pinkie finger, and rarely, 5-thumb:

```
G---------5--7--5--------------------
D-------------------------------------
A---0--5-----------------------------
E-------------------------------------
    1  1     3
```

It is becoming popular to indicate time in TAB by writing over each note a letter indicating the time value of the note: s=sixteenth note, e=eighth note, q=quarter note, h=half note, w=whole note. It is possible to add dots to this system as is done with normal notes. In addition, vertical bars are usually used to indicate measure breaks. TAB noted this way might look like this:

```
    w   q  s  s  e  q  h   q. e  e  e  s  s  e   h
G-----|----5--7--5-------|-------------5--7--7-|----
D-----|------------------|-3--3--5--7----------|----
A---0-|-5-----------8--5-|---------------------|-5--
E-----|------------------|---------------------|----
```

--
Steve Schmidt <><> whale@leland.stanford.edu
I can no longer sit back and allow Communist infiltration, Communist indoctrination, Communist subversion, and the international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids!

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Lessons in Bass Line Construction

Steve Schmidt
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Lesson 1 - The Role of the Bass Line

This is the first in a series of lessons whose focus is on constructing bass lines. The goal is to introduce players to the basic elements of music; to explain why the bass plays a particular note at a particular time and the effect that bass lines have on a piece of music. While most of the examples in the lessons will be drawn from rock music and blues (my particular genres), the basic principles being explained are applicable to any form of music featuring a bass line, whether played on an electric bass, acoustic bass, or other instrument. The lessons presume some minimal knowledge of music theory: mostly that one know the names of the notes (A, B, B-flat, etc), can find those notes on the bass, and have some notion of time (quarter-note, half-note, measure). Other concepts are introduced as needed, though not always in great detail, and if you have not studied music theory a good book on that subject might also be a good thing to read while learning to play bass. Examples will be given in TAB notation because of the ease of transmitting it over computer networks, although it is wise to learn to read standard music notation as well.

The first thing to understand in constructing your bass lines is the role that the instrument plays in the music. In almost all musical forms, the bass has two important functions to fulfill. First, the bass defines the chords being played and guides the movement of the music from one chord to another. This role is usually shared with a guitar or a piano. Second, the bass provides the rhythm of the music being played. This role is usually shared with the drums. Because it links the two functions of rhythm and harmony, the bass is often the instrument around which the rest of the music is organized. This lesson begins with a very brief discussion of chords, and then follows with a discussion of rhythm and how the bass defines it. Lesson 3 will take up the subject of chords in more detail.

All music is organized into chords. A chord is a set of three or more different notes being played simultaneously, with one of the notes being the root note of the chord and the other notes defining the type of chord being

played. The job of the bass is to indicate which chord is being played at a given moment, and this is most easily achieved by playing the root note of the chord. For example, the song "Dancing with Myself" by Billy Idol is organized into 8-measure verses and choruses. In each of these 8-measure patterns, an E major chord is played in the first two measures, a A major chord is played in the 3rd and 4th measures, a B major chord is played in the 5th and 6th measures, and the A major chord again in the 7th and 8th measures. In each measure, the bass plays 8th notes on the root of the given chord:

(all notes 8th notes)

```
   E                                                A
G-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
D-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
A-------------------------|-------------------------|-0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|
E--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|-0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|-------------------------|

  Well I've been all around the world, and there's    Every type of girl

                            B
G-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
D-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
A--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|-2--2--2--2--2--2--2--2-|-2--2--2--2--2--2--2--2-|
E-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|

               But your     Empty eyes seem to pass me by and leave me

   A
G-------------------------|-------------------------|
D-------------------------|-------------------------|
A--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|-0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|
E-------------------------|-------------------------|

Dancing with myself...              oh oh oh oh
```

This is a very simple bass line, but it fulfills both of its intended roles. First, it clearly indicates what chord is being played at any moment in the song, by playing only the root note on each beat. There is a very large amount of music (dance music, heavy metal) in which most or all of the notes played by the bass are just the roots of the chords being played by the band, and some very powerful bass lines can be written this way.

Secondly, this bass line gives a simple and clear rhythm to the song: an even rhythm of 8th notes. If you sing this bass line to yourself, you probably sing it as "dah dah dah dah dah dah dah dah", with the same stress, or accent, on each beat. Other bass lines supply different rhythms using the root notes of the chords. For example, the bass line to the Police song "Message in a Bottle" also uses only root notes, but uses a very different rhythm. Over the verses, the bass line repeats this two-measure phrase:

```
   e    q  e  q. e  e   q  e  q.  e  e
G----|----------------|---------------|
D----|----------------|---------------|
A--4-|--4--4--0--r--0-|-2--2--------4-|
E----|----------------|-------2---r---|

          Just a castaway....        Island lost at sea, oh...
```

where the chords are C# minor, A major, B minor, and F# minor, and they change every half-measure. This rhythm stresses beats 1, 2, 2-and, and 4-and, by playing notes on those beats and holding notes, or resting, on the other beats. (Count each measure as 1-and-2-and-3-and-4-and, providing 8 beats for the 8th notes to fall on. The accented beats are the 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 8th of the 8th notes in the measure.) However, the chorus uses almost the same even 8th note beat as the Billy Idol song above does:

```
     e  e  e  e  e  e  e  e   e  e  e  q  e  e  e
G--|------------------------|---------------------|
D--|------------------------|---------------------|
A--|-0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|-5--5--5--7--7--7--7-|
E--|------------------------|---------------------|

     I'll send an SOS to the world....
```

where the chords are A major over the first bar, and D major and E major over the second bar. By varying the rhythm used over the two parts of the song (along with variations by the drummer), the bassist adds considerable variety and style to the song, even though he hasn't played any notes except the root notes of the various chords.

Both of the above songs are organized aroud an 8th-note beat; that is to say, the smallest unit of rhythm is the 8th note. No 16th notes are used in the rhythm figures. Most popular music nowadays is written to 8th-note beats, although dance music and funk music uses 16th-note beats, and jazz musicians write music in a number of different beat patterns. To generate a rhythm, the bassist (and drummer) simply choose which beats to accent and which beats not to accent. In the Billy Idol song, all notes receive the same emphasis. In the Police song, however, some are emphasized, or accented, and others are not.

As a bass player, you have four tools at your disposal to provide emphasis, or the lack thereof, to a beat. They are:

1. Play the root note of the chord being played on a given beat. This is the strongest, most emphatic note you can play.
2. Play a note on the beat, but not the root note of the chord. This is still emphatic but not so much so as the root note.
3. Don't play a new note on the beat, but carry over the note you were playing on the previous beat. This de-emphasizes the beat, because the bass isn't adding a new sound on it.
4. Rest: play no note at all. This is the most de-emphasizing thing you can do

on a beat.

The most important part of writing a bass line is deciding which beats to emphasize and which beats not to emphasize. In particular, deciding where to use rests to de-emphasize a beat is essential to constructing good, solid, supporting bass lines. Sting, the bass player for the Police, is an excellent bass player to listen to if you want to hear the creative use of rests in bass lines. You can see the rests used in the song Message in a Bottle above: by placing a rest on the 4th beat of each measure, he makes the use of the root note on the 4-and beat even more emphatic than it would ordinarily be. Sting is a master of very simple, very elegant bass lines that add a lot to the music he's playing, and every beginning bass player should listen to a lot of his music to hear how he does it.

Which notes should you emphasize and which should you not? This is a question which can only be answered by you as the artist, and the drummer, who is your partner in determining the rhythm of the song. There are some general guidelines that you can use to help you select your rhythms, however. The most important is that you should usually play the root note on the first beat of each measure. Since this note defines the start of the measure, and since most chord changes occur on this beat, it is important to determine the overall rhythm of the song by placing a strong emphasis here. Almost all bass lines you'll ever see place the root note on the first beat of each chord, and on the first beat of each measure even if the chord has not changed. In doing so they set a general pattern for the music. Other beats in the rhythm of the song can either highlight this pattern, or contrast with it, depending on the amount of tension you want to have in the rhythm of your song. A second guideline is that you should stick to one basic rhythm pattern for a fairly long period of time (8-16 measures at least) in order for the rhythm to be heard, and felt, by the listener. If you change rhythm every two measures, then the audience won't have time to detect the patterns you're playing, and won't be able to feel the patterns in the music, or the changes in those patterns which are what makes music interesting.

There are a number of basic rhythms that are common to many types of music. One of the most common rhythms in jazz is the quarter-note rhythm. Like the 8th-note rhythm, all the beats are even, but the notes played are quarter notes, and the first beat of each measure is emphasized by playing the root of the given chord under it, while other notes are usually not the root notes. An example:

(all notes are quarter notes)

```
   C major                   D minor     G7

G-----------2-|--5--2-------|-------3--2-|-0----------|
D-----5--3----|--------5--2-|-0--3-------|----0--3--2-|
A--3----------|-------------|------------|------------|
E-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
```

Note how the root of the chord is played on the first beat of each measure; although for the two measures of C chord, a different C is played. Note also that none of the notes on other beats are the roots. By playing the root on the first beat, the bassist strengthens that beat just enough to provide a recognizable rhythm, and also defines the chord changes.

Another beat that's common to many forms of music, including country and western music, polka music, and klezmer music, is the following beat. Like the jazz beat above, it's a quarter-note beat, but instead of playing notes on all four beats, it rests on beats 2 and 4 to de-emphasize those beats and strengthen the 1 and 3 beats. (Quarter-note beats are counted 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4). It might go like this:

(all notes are quarter notes)

```
   C major                   F major                     C major

G-------------|-------------|------------|-------5--r-|----
D-----r--5--r-|-----r--5--r-|-3--r-------|-3--r-------|----
A--3----------|--3----------|-------3--r-|------------|--3-
E-------------|-------------|------------|------------|----
```

where again, the root is played on beat 1, a different note is played on beat 3, and no note is played on beats 2 and 4. If you sing this to yourself, you'll probably sing it "dum (rest) dum (rest) dum (rest) dum (rest)", highlighting the difference between the accented beats and the rest beats. Note how different this rhythm is from the following one:

```
   C major       F major        C major

   h  h   h  h   h  h   h  h   h
G-------|------|------|------|----
D-----5-|----5-|-3----|-3----|----
A--3----|-3----|----3-|----3-|-3-
E-------|------|------|------|----
```

which is exactly the same except that there are no rests: each note is a half note rather than the quarter notes above. This beat is dull and monotonous compared to the one above, which has a distinct up-down-up-down feel which is added by the rests. Let this serve as an example of how powerful rests can be in creating rhythmic bass lines.

A variation on this beat that's used in a lot of pop music is the following one. It's actually an 8th note beat, and instead of emphasizing beats 1 and 3, it emphasizes beats 1 and 2-and. For simplicity, I'll show it here with all root notes:

```
   C major                 F major       G major
```

```
   q. q. q   q. q. q   q. q. q   q. q. q
G----------|---------|---------|---------|
D----------|---------|-3--3--r-|-3--5--r-|
A--3--3--r-|-3--3--r-|---------|---------|
E----------|---------|---------|---------|
```

Beats 1 and 2-and are emphasized by the root, beat 3 is slightly de-emphazised by carrying over the note from the 2-and beat, and beat 4 is strongly de-emphasized by resting on that beat. Lesson 2 will feature a song using this beat prominently to give you more of a feel for it.

There are hundreds or thousands of beats out there for you to listen to: rock beats, jazz beats, swing beats, shuffle beats, rap beats, reggae beats, calypso beats, and many more. Rhythm is a very difficult thing to talk about abstractly: it's something you have to experience and feel before you'll be able to play it. The best solution is to put on your headphones and listen to music. Hear the bassist and drummer, and hear the rhythm they're playing. The interaction of the bassist and the drummer to create rhythm is probably the most single important element of popular music (at least most bass players seem to think so!) and it's the single most important skill for a bass player to have. (Or, as Jeff Berlin is fond of saying, "You will never be hired to tap.") To develop rhythm, you have to listen to other people who have it, and also to a few who don't. It comes with experience, and there is no way to teach it in a purely academic way.

The last comment about rhythm to make is that sticking strictly and rigorously to a single rhythm, with no variations, is boring. Good rhythm sections find a way to maintain a basic rhythm while occasionally providing slightly different accents, or extra notes to highlight a particular half-measure. This is where the partnership between a bassist and drummer is most important: as one player departs from the basic rhythm to add accents and fills, the other player must play solid and steady so that the first player can come back to the basic rhythm. Listen to your favorite bands and hear when the drummer departs from the basic rhythm and when the bass player does, and hear how they come back together again to provide a steady and familiar yet not boring pattern. When a bassist and drummer have played together long enough to know each other's styles and habits, they can play complicated and difficult patterns together without losing track of the basic rhythm they're playing (and, more important, without the listeners losing track). This is why it's important to find yourself a live drummer and play with him/her regularly: you need to develop these give-and-take skills, to keep a rhythm going with a partner, varying it in time and in accent without losing the basic thread of the song. You can't do this with a metronome or a drum machine, for the obvious reasons. It's what makes the rhythm section the heart and soul of any good band.

Lesson 2 will talk about playing notes other than the root notes; which ones to play, where to play them, and what their effect is.

Steve

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I can no longer sit back and allow Communist infiltration, Communist indoctrination, Communist subversion, and the international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids!

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Lessons in Bass Line Construction
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Lesson 2 - Beyond the Root Note

In the previous lesson we discussed the two main functions of the bass in music: defining the chords and providing rhythm. In this lesson, we're going to talk about using non-root notes to provide a motion from one chord to the next, which gives a song a sense of direction, and about some ways to make the bass line a little more interesting than a sequence of roots.

The bass lines in the last lesson used predominantly root notes to define chords. When the chord changed, the bass line leapt from one root to the next, like so:

(all notes are 8th notes)

```
   E           A            E           A            E
G-------------------------|-------------------------|----
D-------------------------|-------------------------|----
A--------------0--0--0--0-|--------------0--0--0--0-|----
E--0--0--0--0--------------|-0--0--0--0--------------|-0--
```

The movement from one chord to the next is rather abrupt. By making the movement from one root to the next in a couple of steps, rather than in one large leap, the bass line can provide a sense of movement and anticipation to the music that isn't present in the simple examples earlier. You can also play something other than the root note for change...
The simplest way to do this is to add a single note, on the beat before each change, which is in between the two roots, usually just below the higher one. For example, we might play this:

(all notes are 8th notes)

```
   E           A            E           A            E
G-------------------------|-------------------------|----
D-------------------------|-------------------------|----
```

```
A--------------0--0--0----|-------------0--0--0----|----
E--0--0--0--4-----------4-|-0--0--0--4-----------4-|-0--
```

In this figure, we play the note G# (a half-step below the A) as a transition between the E and the A. Such a note is called a leading tone, or passing tone. It gives a sense of movement to the bass line which isn't present in the first line. In addition, playing a non-root note on the 2-and beat, and the 4-and beat, reduces the emphasis on that note slightly, providing a contrast with the new root note coming in on the 3 and 1 beats following.

You can play a single passing tone, or, if the chord changes are farther apart, you can play more than one. For example, consider this bass line:

(all notes are 8th notes)

```
   E                         A                         E
G-------------------------|------------------------|----
D-------------------------|------------------------|----
A-------------------------|-0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|----
E--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-|------------------------|-0--
```

Here, there are 8 beats between chord changes, and we can use more than one of those beats to move from the E to the A. We might alter the last three notes of each measure as follows:

(all notes are 8th notes)

```
   E                         A                         E
G-------------------------|------------------------|----
D-------------------------|------------------------|----
A-------------------------|-0--0--0--0--0----------|----
E--0--0--0--0--0--2--3--4-|----------------4--3--2-|-0--
```

Here we use a sequence of three leading tones to move us from the E to the A. In this particular case, we've used three notes each a half-step apart to make the transition. There are other possibilities. In between the E and the A are 4 notes and you can use any or all of them in making the change. We'll take up the choice between the possible sequences in a later lesson; but it would be possible to use any of them in an appropriate piece of music.

The following bass line, from the theme song to the movie "Stand By Me" (I can't remember who the original artist was, unfortunately), demonstrates a bass line that moves between 4 chords, using passing tones to get from one to the next. It also uses the dotted-quarter note rhythm, emphasizing the 1 and 2-and beats with root notes, that we saw in lesson 1.

```
          D major                   B minor

   e  e   q. q. e  e   q. q. e  e   q. q. e  e   q. q. e  e
G-------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
```

```
D-------|-0--0-------|-0--0--0----|------------|------------|
A--0--4-|-------0--4-|----------4-|-2--2--r--0-|-2--2--2--0-|
E-------|------------|------------|------------|------------|

   Oh I   won't be a-  fraid, no I  won't  shed a tear, just as

   G major      A major      D major

   q. q. e  e   q. q. e  e   q. q. e  e   q. q.
G-------------|------------|------------|-------
D-------------|------------|-0--0-------|-0--0--
A-----------2-|-0--0--0--4-|-------0--4-|-------
E--3--3--3----|------------|------------|-------

   long as you  stand, stand by me.
```

This line is one of the simplest and yet most powerful bass lines in popular music. It has a lot of features worth noting. First, it uses the same rhythm in each measure: two dotted quarter notes on the roots, followed by two eighth notes, or a note and a rest. (Note that the vocal line is singing essentially the same rhythm.) Second, the dotted quarters are always roots, which emphasizes those beats more strongly than the eighth notes, which are not roots, but are leading notes, leading towards the root of the next measure: A to C# to D for the D major chords, D to C# to B for the B minor chords, B to A to G for the G major, and G to B to A for A major. See that, while the leading tone is usually between the two root notes, it doesn't have to be: for the G major to A major transition, with only G# as a possible in-between note, the author chose instead to go up to the B, then back down to the A. This is still called a leading tone, although it's not quite the same as the others, because it fulfills the same function: it warns of an upcoming chord change, and gives a pointer in the direction that the chord is going to move.

A third thing to note is that the leading notes are played each measure, regardless of whether the chord is changing or not. So in measure 6, we play A-C#-D to move from the A chord to the D chord; and in measure 7 we play A-C#-D again even though we're staying on the D chord. The sequence still points to the root of the chord, so why not play it again? By doing this, we make the bass line a little more interesting, and we give it more of a sense of movement than it would have if we just played D all the time. Playing leading sequences is one way to add movement and emphasis to a song that isn't changing chords at all. For example, here's the bass line from the Doors song LA Woman:

(All notes are 8th notes)

```
   A major

G-------------------------|------------------------|
D-------------------------|------------------------|
```

```
A--0--0--0--0--0----------|-0--0--0--0--0----------|
E-----------------0--3--4-|----------------0--3--4-|
```

repeat ad infinitum :)

This song stays on the same A major chord for 50-60 measures in places, but the leading sequences in the bass lines give it a sense of motion that would not be present if the bassist just played 8th-note A all the time. Although the Doors had no bass player (Ray Manzarek, the keyboard player, used a second keyboard to play the bass parts) for their last few albums a studio bassist was used, and I believe that this line was played on a bass, rather than on keyboards.

Another thing that can be done to add interest to a bass line is to play two different versions of the root note. This idea is the mainstay of funk bass lines. For example, if you were playing a D major chord, you could play the following line:

(Slap all notes on the A string with the right-hand thumb: pop all notes on the G string).

```
   D major

   e  e  s  s  s  e  s  s  s  s  s  e
G--------7-----------7--------------7-|
D-------------------------------------|    Repeat as needed
A--5--5-----r--5--5-----r--5--5--5----|
E-------------------------------------|
```

This line has a lot of things to note about it also. First, all the notes are root notes, but the line uses a low one and a high one to provide variety. Second, this line uses a 16th note rhythm: look at the 16th rests in the line. They follow the popped high note, which increases the impact of the pop. Also, the fifth through ninth notes don't start on an even 8th note. 16th note rhythms are counted "1-e-and-a-2-e-and-a-3-e-and-a-4-e-and-a"; the first four notes start on numbers and ands, but the next five start on "e"s and "a"s. This gives the line a much more syncopated, funky feeling. It also makes it harder to play correctly: you'll probably have a hard time reading this rhythm if you haven't played it before. Work it out very slowly, counting aloud, until you have it down, then gradually work up the tempo. Larry Graham, of Sly and the Family Stone, and later his own band Graham Central Station, was one of the first bassists to play 16th note rhythms, and was also one of the first to slap and pop. If you're into 16th note rhythms, you can get a lot of inspiration from his lines.

You can also combine the ideas of playing different roots and playing leading tones into one bass line. The following line is from the song Purple Haze, by the Jimi Hendrix Experience, with Noel Redding on bass. (At least, this is how I play it in my band. I think the recorded version is a little different.)

```
  E #9                          G7          A7

   e  e  e. s  e  e  e. s   e  e  e. s  e  s  e  s  e
G-------------------------|----------------------------|
D--------2--2--------2--2-|-------5--5----------------|
A-------------------------|-------------------5--6--7-|
E--0--0--------0--0-------|-3--3--------5--5----------|
```

Note the use of the octaves on the E and G roots. This matches the drummer's pattern: where the bass is playing the lower note, the drummer is playing the bass drum and where the bass is playing the higher note, the drummer is playing his snare. For the A7 chord, the bass doesn't play the octave note: instead, it plays D-D#-E leading back to the low E for the next measure. (The drummer plays a drum fill while this is happening, so there's no need to keep playing the octave: he won't be matching it anyway.)

To conclude this lesson, I'll give you one more bass line. It combines all the ideas we've talked about so far: using roots to define the chord, using rests to de-emphasize particular notes, switching from one rhythm to another when changing from verse to chorus, and using leading tones to add movement when the chord isn't changing. This is the bass line from the Police song "Roxanne", and again Sting is the bassist. Observe how the root note is played, but never on the first beat of the measure: in the verse, the bass is resting, while in the chorus either the previous root is tied over, or a leading tone is played on the first note. In the verses, the bass is a little bt behind the chord changes: in the chorus it's a little bit ahead. It makes for a very interesting line, and demonstrates that there's no such thing as a hard and fast rule (at least not for Sting).

Verse:

```
   G min         F maj       Eb maj       D maj        C min

   e  e  q  h   e  e  q  h   e  e  q  h   e  e  q  h   e  e  q  h
G-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
D--r--5--5--r-|-r--3--3--r-|-r--1--1--r-|-r--0--0--r-|-r----------|
A-------------|------------|------------|------------|----3--3--r-|
E-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
```

Roxanne..   You don't have to put on the red light. Walk the street for

```
   F maj              G min

   e  e  q  q  e  e   w   w
G-------------------|---|-----|
D-------------------|---|-----|
A-------------------|---|-r---|  repeats
E--r--1--1--r--3--3-|-3-|-----|
```

```
                    \_/
money...   You don't  care if it's wrong, or if it's right.

Chorus:

          Bb maj                                          F major

   q  e   e  e  e  e  e  e  e  e   e  e  e  e  e  q  e   e  e  e  e
G-------|------------------------|----------------------|------------
D-------|------------------------|----------------1--3-|-3--3--3--3-
A--3--1-|-1--1--1--1--0--1--1--1-|-0--1--1--1--1-----\___/----------
E-----\___/----------------------|----------------------|------------

  Roxanne........                                  Roxanne....

                                     G minor

   e  e  e  e   e  e  e  e  e  q  e   e  e  e  e  e  e  e  e
G-------------|----------------------|------------------------|
D--2--3--3--3-|-2--3--3--3--3-------|------------------------|
A-------------|----------------3----|------------------------|
E-------------|--------------------3-|-3--3--3--3--2--3--3--3-|
                                     \_/
                                     Roxanne..

   e  e  e  e  e  q  e
G----------------------|----
D----------------------|----
A-----------------3--1-|-1--  repeats
E--2--3--3--3--3-----\___/--
```

Lesson 3 will talk about chords in more detail. We'll talk about a few different types of chords, and about using chords in constructing your bass lines.

Steve

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Lessons in Bass Line Construction
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Lesson 3 - Chords and Bass Lines

In Lesson 1, we talked about using the root note of a chord to define the chord, and in Lesson 2 we talked about using leading tones to move from one chord root to the next. In this lesson, we'll talk about playing notes from the chords other than the root notes, and about using them to construct bass figures that you can play over several different chords.

To repeat the definition from Lesson 1, a chord is any group of three or more notes being played simultaneously. The simplest ones are groups of exactly three notes: more complex ones are built by adding extra notes to one of the basic ones. There are four three-note chords, but only two of them are used in most forms of music, major chords and minor chords. (The other two, augmented and diminshed chords, are used mostly in jazz and classical music. I won't mention them again in this lesson, although they'll reappear in a later lesson.)

A major chord consists of three notes; the root note, a note which is two whole steps above the root (called the third), and another note which is one and one-half steps above the third (called the fifth). It may seem odd to call the notes third and fifth instead of second and third; but there's a reason for it, which I'll explain in the next lesson. To give an example, the three note C, E, and G make up a C major chord. E, the third, is two whole steps above the root note, C: and G, the fifth, is 1.5 steps above the E. If you wanted to play these notes on your bass, you might finger them like this:

```
G------------
D------2--5--
A---3--------
E------------
```

and you'd get a C major chord. In fact, the pattern:

```
-----(N-1)--(N+2)--
```

```
--N----------------

  2   1      4
```

on any two consecutive strings will produce a major chord, and this is a fingering that you can use over and over again in your bass lines. (The numbers below the staff indicate fingerings: use your middle finger to play the root, your index finger for the third, and your pinkie for the fifth. Then you can reach all three notes without moving your left hand.)

A minor chord is similar to a major chord, but the intervals are reversed: that is, the third is 1.5 steps above the root, and the fifth is two steps above the third. Thus, the notes C-Eb-G make up a C minor chord. Note that the root and the fifth are the same: only the third differs, and that's what makes the two chords sound different when played on a guitar. You can play a C minor chord like this:

```
G------------
D---------5--
A---3--6-----
E------------
```

and in general the pattern:

```
------------(N+2)--
--N--(N+3)-----------

  1   4      3
```

produces the notes of a minor chord, and you can play all three without moving your left hand.

In the past lessons we've used the root note of a chord to define it, but now we have three notes of the chord that we can use to define it. We can play just the root, as we've been doing, and that is sufficient; or we can play two or three of them, if we like. Here's a bass line that does the latter: it's the line from "Twist and Shout", which has been played by a lot of bands including the Beatles. It also happens to be the bass line for "La Bamba" by Ritchie Valens, by a strange twist of fate. Think of it as whichever one you like.

```
   C major  F major      G major   F major

   q  e  e  e  e  e  e   e  q. e  e  e  e  e
G--------------2--5----|---------------------|
D-----2--5--3--------5-|-5--r--0--3--3--2--0-|   repeat
A--3------------------\_/--------------------|
E----------------------|---------------------|

  Cmon and shake it up baby (shake it up baby)
```

Twist and Shout (twist and shout)

You can see the outline of the C major chord in the first half-measure, just as we wrote it above. You can also see the outline of the F major chord in the second half of the first measure: it's the same pattern played one string higher. For the G, we hit only one note, the root, and hold it: then we play the root of the F chord, followed by a leading sequence back down to the C major chord, where the phrase repeats.

You can also play two of the notes of the chord, rather than all three. The bass line that is at the heart of almost all country music does that: it plays the root and fifth on alternating beats.

(all notes are quarter notes)

```
   C major                   F major                   C major

G-------------|-------------|------------|-------5--r-|----
D-----r--5--r-|-----r--5--r-|-3--r-------|-3--r-------|----
A--3----------|--3----------|-------3--r-|------------|--3-
E-------------|-------------|------------|------------|----
```

It alternates root-fifth-root-fifth-root-fifth. Doesn't actually do much else, but it does serve to outline the chord being played at all times. Because of its simplicity and power, it's one of the most heavily used ideas for bass lines in all of popular music; besides country music, bluegrass music, some folk music, and occasional bits of rock and jazz use it as well. It does, however, get boring after a while: you might like to use some leading notes to jazz it up a little bit. One bass line that does so is the one from the song "Wipeout" by the Beach Boys. It goes like this:

(all notes are 8th notes)

```
             E major

G----------|------------------------|------------------------|
D-----0--1-|-2--2--2--0--------0--1-|-2--2--2--0--------0--1-|
A--2-------|-------------2--2-------|-------------2--2-------|
E----------|------------------------|------------------------|

                                                   A major

G-------------------------|-------------------0--1-|-2--2--2--0--------0--1-|
D--2--2--2--0--------0--1-|-2--2--2--0-----2-------|-------------2--2-------|
A--------------2--2-------|-------------2----------|------------------------|
E-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|

                              E major

G--2--2--2--0-------------|------------------------|--------------------2--3-|
```

```
D--------------2-----0--1-|-2--2--2--0--------0--1-|-2--2--2--0-----4-------|
A-----------------2-------|-------------2--2-------|-------------2----------|
E-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|

   B major                   A major                   E major

G--4--4--4--2--------0--1-|-2--2--2--0-------------|-------------------------|
D--------------4--2-------|-------------2-----0--1-|-2--2--2--0--------0--1-|
A-------------------------|----------------2-------|-------------2--2-------|
E-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|

   B major

G-------------------------|
D--2-----------------0--1-|
A-----2--2--2--2--2-------|  repeat
E-------------------------|
```

This line plays the root three times, a leading note down to the fifth played twice, and then a two-note leading sequence back to the root. It's playing exactly the same figure under each chord: (root-root-root-lead-fifth-fifth-lead-lead) are always played, in that order. The leading tones make it much more driving that it would be if only roots and fifths were played: try it and see.

It's very common to do as this bass line does; play the same pattern under each chord, changing the pattern up and down the fingerboard to keep the root in the right place, but otherwise not varying the line at all. When the bass line has this form, the pattern is often called a bass figure (or bass pattern, or bass riff) and a lot of rock music relies heavily on such figures. This figure is a pretty simple one: we'll run into some more simple ones later in this lesson and into some more complex ones in later lessons.

In addition to the simple three-note chords, there are a number of four-note chords, and also five-, six-, and seven-note chords as well. Of this vast array of chords, only a few four-note chords are widely used outside of jazz, and I'm only going to talk about those chords. They're made by adding one more note onto a basic three note chord. The most commonly used four-note chord is made by starting with a major chord and adding the note 1.5 steps above the fifth. For example, starting with a C major chord, whose fifth is G, you would add the note Bb, which is three half-steps above G. The following chord (which is made of the notes C-E-G-Bb) is called a seventh chord, or a dominant chord, and the new note is called the seventh note. You can play C7 like this:

```
G-----------3--
D-----2--5-----
A--3-----------
E--------------
```

and in general you can add the 7th note to the major scale pattern I gave

earlier, like this:

```
--------------------N--
-----(N-1)--(N+2)------
--N--------------------

  2   1      4      2
```

and get the four notes of any 7th chord you like. Seventh chords are easily the most commonly used four-note chord. You can also make a minor seventh chord, by starting with a minor chord instead of a major chord. For example, the C minor 7 chord is made of the notes C, Eb, G, and Bb, and you can play one like this:

```
G-----------3--
D--------5-----
A--3--6--------
E--------------
```

(I'll let you work out the general pattern for this one). The minor 7th chord isn't used much in rock music (although see Gallows Pole, by Led Zeppelin, for an interesting example of it) but it is very common in jazz music.

Another note you can add to a major chord is the note that is one whole step above the fifth of the chord. This note is called the 6th note, and a chord that contains it is called a 6th chord. For example, a C6 chord is made up of the notes C, E, and G, plus the new note A (one step above G). This chord is fingered as follows:

```
G-----------2--
D-----2--5-----
A--3-----------
E--------------
```

and it's the second most common four-note chord, after the 7th chord. The single most widely used bass line in recorded music is based on it: if you have ever listened to any kind of blues music, you've heard this line somewhere. The most widely know song that uses it is probably "Johnny B. Goode" by Chuck Berry, but there are literally thousands of songs, in all keys, all styles and all tempos, that use it. It looks like this:

(all notes are quarter notes)

```
  C major 6

G-----------2-|-5--2-------|----------2-|-5--2-------|
D-----2--5----|-------5--2-|----2--5----|-------5--2-|
A--3----------|------------|-3----------|------------|
E-------------|------------|------------|------------|
```

```
  F major 6                  C major 6

G-------------|------------|----------2-|-5--2-------|
D-----------0-|-3--0-------|----2--5----|-------5--2-|
A-----0--3----|-------3--0-|-3----------|------------|
E--1----------|------------|------------|------------|

  G major 6                  C major 6

G-------------|------------|----------2-|-5--2-------|
D-----------2-|-5--2-------|----2--5----|-------5--2-|
A-----2--5----|-------5--2-|-3----------|------------|
E--3----------|------------|------------|------------|
```

It's based on a very simple figure: start on the root, run up the C6 chord to the high root, then run back down again. The figure is played under three different chords: C, F, and G, and it lasts twelve bars. The general pattern is known as the twelve-bar blues, and it's probably the most widely used song form in popular music. Note, for example, that Wipeout (transcribed above) is on the same pattern, using the chords E, A, and B instead. (It uses a different figure, but the same pattern of chords, and the same method of repeating one figure under each chord.)

One last point on chords in bass lines. In all of the above examples, the first note played in each chord is the root note. Thus, we're still using the root note to define each chord: the other notes of the chord are just helping to flesh it out once we've already stated the main outline. Most music never does anything else, but occasionally (most commonly in jazz) a note other than the root will be the first (or only) note played under a given chord. Borrowing some terms from classical music, we say that a chord is in "root position" if the root is played first. We say that it's in "first inversion" if the third is used to define the chord change, and in "second inversion" if the fifth is the first note played. Second inversion is rarely used: first inversion is usually used when playing a two-chord sequence twice in a row. Thus, instead of playing:

```
   F     Bb     F     Bb

G-------------|------------|
D--------3--3-|-------3--3-|
A--1--1-------|-1--1-------|
E-------------|------------|
```

you might instead play:

```
   F     Bb     F     Bb

G-------------|------------|
D--------3--3-|-------7--7-|
```

```
A--1--1-------|-5--5-------|
E-------------|------------|
```

playing the chords in first inversion in the second measure, just to add variety to the line.

For more complex chords used in jazz, you can usually play just about any chord note you like out of them, although it's still a good idea to start with the root note for the sake of identifying the chord. However, for some chords, the root note doesn't sound very good under the chord; usually this happens when another note in the chord is very dissonant with the root. Common chords than do this include Cb5 (C flat 5) and Cb9 (C flat 9) (or any other root note of course). In such cases you usually do best to try first inversion, ie playing the third of the chord on the first beat, and then moving off to either the root, or to the dissonant note, as the case may be. I'll talk more about playing under strange chords when I talk about scales in a later lesson.

Occasionally, a composer will specify a particular note for the bass when writing a chord. Such chords might be referred to as "C major with an A in the bass" which is exactly what you think - the guitar/piano plays the C major chord but the bassist ignores that and plays the A. Chords like that are usually written "C/A", where the letter before the slash indicates the chord and the letter after the slash indicates the bass note. It's usually done to give the impression that a different chord is being played. In this example, the C major chord consists of the notes C E G ; but when the A is added in the bass, you get the four notes A C E G which is an A minor 7th chord. However, if the chord was written Amin7, then the guitar and piano would probably play the A note as well, and if the composer doesn't want that to happen for some reason, he can write "C/A" and get the desired effect. This format can also be used to force inversions: for example, you might see the chord "G/B" which means G major with B in the bass. This just means that the composer wants the G chord in first inversion: you should almost always respect the composer's wishes in such cases.

I'll end this lesson with one more (short) example of using several notes from a chord to create a bass line. This line is based on a one-measure pattern, and that pattern repeats, no changes, for about 5 minutes under the solos in the middle of the song. The measure contains two chords, A minor and E7, and each note in the line comes from one of those two chords. The song is "Light My Fire" by the Doors, and this time I have to apologize for using a line that was played on keyboards instead of on bass... it's too good a line to pass up! Most bands that play this song play the line on bass anyway, so we can forgive Mr. Manzarek some chutzpah in this case.

```
  A minor   E7

   q  e  e  q  e  e
G-------------------|
```

```
D--------2-----0--2-|  repeat, and repeat again!
A--0--3-----2-------|
E-------------------|
```

That's all there is to it, and this one measure is played for most of the song. The first three notes are A, C, and E, the A minor chord, and the last three notes are B, D, and E, which are the fifth, 7th, and root, respectively, of the E7 chord.

In the next lesson I'll talk about scales, and I'll talk about what a key is, and how the key that a song is in determines which chords are used in that song.

Steve

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Lessons in Bass Line Construction
Steve Schmidt
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Lesson 4 - Major Scales, Keys, Chord Changes, and the Circle of Fifths

In the last lesson, we talked about creating bass lines based on the chords of the song being played. In this lesson, we'll talk about scales, which determine which chords are used in a song and in what sequence, and we'll work through major scales and give some examples of common songs built on major scales and some common chord changes. We'll also introduce the Circle of Fifths, which is something most bass players have heard of and all of them should know perfectly. Knowing the common chord patterns will make it much easier to learn songs off records, because it lets you make accurate guesses about where the bass line is likely to go, and it will also help you in writing songs if you are interested in doing that.

The first thing to observe is that although there are 12 different notes in music (A, B flat, C, D flat, and so on up to A flat), most songs don't use all of those notes: in fact, most don't use any more than 7 of them. Which notes are used in a given song is determined by the key of the song, and the choice of a key gives the composer (or bass player) a guide to choosing the chords and notes he wants to use in writing the song (or the bass line). And, if you know what key a song is in, then it will help you figure out the bass line to that song, because it gives you a good guide as to what notes might be used in the song's bass line and which notes will not be used.

The notes that are associated with a given key are called a scale. For example, we might want to write a song in they key of C major, and if we did that we'd use the notes from the C major scale. That scale is: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C; all the white keys on the piano and none of the black keys. You can play that scale at a piano or on your bass: on the bass, the notes are:

```
G-----------------2--4--5--
D--------2--3--5-----------
A--3--5--------------------
E--------------------------
```

If you play this scale, you'll notice that it has a very comfortable, familiar

sound to it; that's because major scales are the most widely used scales in music. There's nothing magical about C as the choice of a starting note: you can create a major scale starting on any note you like, and there will be a major key associated with that scale. The thing that defines a major scale is that it contains 7 notes, and they are all a whole step apart except for the 3rd and 4th note which are a half-step apart. (There is also a half-step between the 7th note and the next octave of the 1st note.) Thus, you can create the D major scale by starting on D and going up by whole steps, except after the 3rd (and 7th) note. Thus, the D major scale would be: D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D. Note the half-step between F# and G, and between C# and D. You can play this scale on your bass like this:

```
G-----------------4--6--7--
D--------4--5--7-----------
A--5--7--------------------
E---------------------------
```

Notice that this pattern is exactly the same as the C major scale above, except that it's two frets higher. In fact, this same general pattern will form a major scale starting on any string, at any fret. For example, the F major scale looks like this:

```
G---------------------------
D-----------------0--2--3--
A--------0--1--3-----------
E--1--3--------------------
```

which is the same fingering pattern, starting at the 1st fret of the E string. A song written using these 7 notes would be said to be in the key of F major You can keep going up the fingerboard if you like, starting again on the new new F: if you do this you'll repeat the 1st note as the 8th note, the 2nd note as the 9th note, and so on. In F major, the result would look like this:

```
G------------------------------2--3--5--7--9--10
D-----------------0--2--3--5-------------------
A--------0--1--3-------------------------------
E--1--3----------------------------------------
```

and you can see that the 2nd note and the 9th note are both G, and 3rd note and the 10th note are both A, etc. Sometimes G will be called the 2nd or the 9th, depending on the circumstances.

Once you've chosen a key for the song, you can then start choosing the chords to use in the song. Because you now only have 7 notes to choose from, the number of chords you can form is reduced. For example, suppose you are writing in the key of C major, and you want to form a chord with C as the root note. You can't use C minor, because that requires an E-flat, which is not a note of the C major scale. However, you can form the C major chord, by using the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes of the scale: C, E, and G. (This is why the three notes of the C major chord are called 1st, 3rd, and 5th: they are the 1st,

3rd and 5th note of the C major scale). If you wanted to form a chord with D as the root note, you can't form D major (it requires a F-sharp) but you can form D minor using D, F, and A, the 2nd, 4th, and 6th notes of the scale. So, if you are writing in the key of C major, you will end up using the chord D minor rather than D major. If you wanted to form a four-note chord with G as the root, you would use the G, B, D, and F (the 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th notes) and you would get a G7 chord.

The main purpose of choosing a key is to guide you in selecting the chords to use in your song. Consider, for example, the song "You Shook Me All Night Long" by AC-DC. It's in the key of G major and goes like this:

Verse: (repeat as needed)

```
    G         C     G  C  G      D            G     D  G  D
G-----------|------------------|------------|----------------
D-----------|------------------|------------|----------------
A---------3-|-3--3-----3-----5-|-5--5--r----|-------5-----5--
E---3--r----|-------3-----3----|----------3-|-3--3-----3-----
```

She was a fast machine, she kept her motor clean, she was the best damn woman that I've ever seen.

Chorus: (repeat as needed)

```
   G            C  Bm     D            C  Bm
G-------------|---------|------------|----------
D-------------|---------|------------|----------
A-----0--2--3-|-3--2--5-|-5--0--2--3-|-3--2-----
E--3----------|---------|------------|-------3--
```

You Shook me All Night Long You really shook me yeah,

The bass plays mostly root notes. Between the verse and chorus the bass line makes two changes: first, it plays only roots in the verse, but starts playing some passing notes between roots in the chorus; and second, the verse contains rests between long notes, but in the chorus there are no rests and the notes are connected to one another.

However, the main thing to notice about this song at the moment is the choice of chords. The song is on the G major scale: G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G. In TAB it looks like this:

```
G--------------------------
D-----------------2--4--5--
A-----0--2--3--5-----------
E--3----------------------
```

and notice that all of the notes of the bass line, even the passing notes in the chorus, come from this scale. The chords used are G major (G,B,D), C major (C, E, G), D major (D, F#, A) and B minor (E, G, B), and all of those

notes come from the G major scale as well. In fact, in the whole song, both guitar parts, bass line, and vocal line together, you won't find any notes that are not part of the G major scale.

In general, once you've chosen a key, you've chosen whether to have major or minor chords for each of the notes in the scale, and what kind of 7th to use if you use one. I'll work out the chords for the G major scale, but you should notice that you'll always get the same types of chords for any major scale you might pick:

G major scale: G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, [G, A, B, C, D, E]

Root Note	Notes	Chord	7th	7th chord
G	G,B,D	G major	F#	G maj7
A	A,C,E	A minor	G	A min7
B	B,D,F#	B minor	A	B min7
C	C,E,G	C major	B	C maj7
D	D,F#,A	D major	C	D7
E	E,G,B	E minor	D	E min7
F#	F#,A,C	F# dim	E	E half-dim7

In general, in a major key the chords formed using the 1st, 4th, and 5th scale note are major, the ones formed on the 2nd, 3rd, and 6th notes are minor, and the one on the 7th note is diminished. You can refer to the chord simply by the number of the scale note that is the root note: so we say that in the key of G major, D major is the fifth chord. Usually it's written out using Roman numerals, so that we say that in the key of G, G major is the I chord, A minor is the II chord, C major is the IV chord, etc.

Now that we know what root notes to use to form chords, and what type of chords (major, minor, 7th) to use, we've pretty much decided which chords can be used and which can't be. The next question is, in what order should we use these chords? The answer is, you can use them in pretty much any order you want, except that the song should begin and end on the I chord. However, there are some very common patterns that are used. One of them we've already run into in Wipeout and the 12-bar blues: it is the pattern

I IV I V I

where the first I chord gets 4 measures and each of the other chords gets two measures. There are a number of other common patterns. For example, there is:

I IV I V I

which is the basic pattern from I Saw Her Standing There, by the Beatles. It is in the key of E, and uses the chords E, A and B7.

```
E                           A          E
Well she looked at me, and I, I could see
                                          B7
```

```
That before too long, I'd fall in love with her...
     E                    A
Yeah I'll never dance with another, oooh
        E        B7      E
Since I saw her standing there.
```

A twist on this pattern is to present the V and IV chords in the other order. For example, there is

I V IV I

which is the basic pattern of the chorus of Fortunate Son, by Creedence Clearwater Revival It's in G major so it uses G, D, and C as chords.

```
G            D            C                    G
It ain't me, It ain't me, I ain't no Senator's son, no.
G            D            C                    G
It ain't me, It ain't me, I ain't no Fortunate Son.
```

You can also throw in some common minor chords. A very very common pattern in jazz music is

I II V7 I

where the II chord is minor. However, since most jazz songs don't have words, it's hard to provide an example. You'll have to trust me that if you listen to jazz you'll hear it a lot.

You can also use the sequence:

I VI IV V I

where the VI chord is minor. This pattern is the basis of the song "Lollipop" with each chord getting one measure. In the key of F major it'd go like this:

```
F         Dm        B flat         C7
Lollipop, lollipop, oh lollie, lollipop (repeat ad nausem)
```

Try playing these chords on a piano or guitar and you'll see that they sound quite natural played in that order. However, if you play the D minor chord as major instead (using the F# instead of F) you'll find it a little jarring, because the F# is not a note of the F major scale.

You can also use II instead of IV, if you want to get a second minor chord into the sequence:

I VI II V I

One song that does that is the following popular folk song, Today, which is in D major and uses D, B minor, E minor, and A7 chords:

```
D                Bm             Em           A7
```

```
Today, while the blossoms still cling to the vine
     D               Bm            Em               A7
I'll taste your strawberries, I'll drink your sweet wine
  D          Bm          Em         A7
A million tommorows will all pass away
D        Bm          Em          A7    D
Ere I forget all the joy that is mine, today.
```

Folk music in particular tends to use very common chord changes and repeat them over and over, and if you want to develop your ability to recognize the common changes, it's not a bad idea to listen to some folk music because you will hear them very clearly there.

There is one last piece of information about chord patterns that every bass player ought to know. It summarizes all the information about how chords move from one to the next in a simple way. It's called the Circle of Fifths, and it's created by writing out the 12 notes in this order: each note is followed by the 5th note of its major scale. Thus, if we start with C, we follow it with G (the 5th note of the C major scale). We follow the G with D, which is the 5th note of the G major scale, and D is followed by A, and so on around the octave until we get to F, which is followed by C, and we're back to where we started. The complete Circle of Fifths looks like this:

```
                C
           F         G
      Bb/A#               D
  Eb/D#                        A
      Ab/G#             E
           Db/C#     B
               Gb/F#
```

There are two basic rules for chord changes. The first is that short movements along the circle sound more natural than long ones. For example, the chord change C major to G major is very natural, whereas the change C major to E minor is more awkward. The second rule is that clockwise moves (forward) make the song seem to be developing forwards, whereas counter-clockwise moves (backward) make the song be resolving. The chord changes we gave above are these:

E A E B E (I Saw Her Standing There). This one involves only single step movements. Starting on E, we go back, forwards, forwards, back.

G D C G (Fortunate Son). This one starts by going forward one step, then jumps back two steps, then resolves by going forward one step.

D Bm Em A7 (Today). This one begins with a three-step jump forward, but then resolves back one step at a time.

F Dm Bb C7 (Lollipop) This one begins with a three-step jump forward, th

en comes _four_ steps back, then two steps forward and resolves with a gentl
e single step back.

Almost all chord movements in all songs involves jumps of 4 steps or less along the Circle, and most of them only 1 or 2 steps. The Circle of Fifths is an invaluable guide to picking up bass lines off a record. The general steps you can follow are these:

1. Listen to the first note and the last chord of the song. This root note of this chord will almost invariably be key of the song. Thus, if the first chord is A major, then the song is very probably in the key of A major.
2. Listen to the song and try to figure out the sequence of chord changes. If you can hear each chord, great: but if you need to guess, guess short steps on the Circle of Fifths before you guess longer ones. eg, if the song opens on A major, it's very likely that the next chord is either D major or E major, and it's very unlikely to be F minor or D flat major.
3. Once you know the sequence of chords of the song, then start trying to find the individual notes of the bass line from the chords that are being played, and from the likely passing notes between those chords.

In the next lesson we'll talk about scales other than major scales, and how to build songs and bass lines on those scales.

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Slapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #2

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Today's topic: Popping and muting

Last time I left you all with this slap, hammer on, slap and mute pattern:

```
        q   q   q   q
G  |---------------------|        q = quarter note
D  |o-------------------o|        S = Slap
A  |o---5---7-----------o|        H = Hammer on
E  |------------0--------|        M = Mute quietly
        S   H   S   M
```

I hope that you all started slowly, like I suggested, and have gotten to the point of having a nice clean clear sound. Work on the sound now and we'll worry about the speed later. You'll be surprised at how soon it will happen.

Now that you've started to get comfortable with slapping, let's add popping to our bag of tricks. To "pop" a string, place your first (index) finger of your slapping hand part way under the string (just enough to grab it), pull the string out lightly and then let it pop back against the fretboard. Keep your hand in the same relaxed position we talked about last time. Keep your first finger just stiff enough to pull the string out. Try popping the G string now.

As with slapping, do it as lightly as you can. You want to play with as little energy as possible. Remember, speed will come from relaxation. Pull just enough to get a good solid "crack" sound. This sound will be

quite percussive and if you're like me, the first time you get a good pop with the amp turned up, it will make you jump! Go for it.

Now turn on your metronome and set it to between 40 and 50. Practice popping the G string on each beat, and mute with your fretting hand half way in between beats. Hold your fretting hand as before, with your thumb about half way down behind the neck, and keep your fingers straight. When you pop, leave the tips of your fingers touching the E, A and D strings and lift just the base of your fingers off of the G string by moving your hand forward, pivoting your wrist slightly. After the pop, you can mute by moving your hand back. You should be able to keep the E, A and D strings muted the whole time.

Once you feel comfortable with this pop - mute process, let's pop with a slap. A very common technique is to slap and pop notes one octave apart. Place the first finger of your fretting hand on the fifth fret of the A string, and the fourth finger of your fretting hand on the seventh fret of the G string. Start up your metronome again (it's still on 50 isn't it?) and practice a slap on the A string and a pop on the G string. Slap on the beat and pop in between. Don't move your fretting hand or worry about muting, just let the notes ring.

```
       e e e e e e e e
G  |-----7---7---7---7---|        e = eighth note
D  |o-------------------o|        S = Slap
A  |o--5---5---5---5----o|        P = Pop
E  |---------------------|
       S P S P S P S P
```

Now, you may accidentally touch the E or D strings, so let's talk more about muting. We're already using the first and fourth fingers for fretting notes. Rest your second (middle) finger lightly on the E string to mute it. You'll have to keep the second finger almost straight, and bend your first and fourth fingers to do it.

Here comes the tough part. So far we have used the first, second and fourth fingers to fret the A string, mute the E string and fret the G string respectively. We could try muting the D string with the third finger, but since the third and fourth fingers are so dependent upon each other, it is hard to keep them working separately. So, to mute the D string, flatten your first finger at the first joint just enough to rest it against the D string. Just let your third finger "hang out" next to the second finger.

Practice the slap and pop for a while, keeping the metronome set to between 40 and 50. Listen carefully to make sure that you aren't

hearing the E or D strings ringing. You may also want to hit them on purpose to make sure that you are muting them properly. Muting is the hardest and most important part of slapping cleanly!!!

Work on this slow slap and pop until you get a clean sound with only the two notes ringing. Alternate popping with your first and second fingers. Try to get the volume levels equal with each.

A WORD OF WARNING: Take it easy here. Popping can be real hard on your fingers! Before you know it, you can get blisters and that will definitely cut into your progress. Stop early, take a break and then go back to it.

OK folks, practice the pop and mute and the octave slap and pop and we'll go further next time.

Take it slow!

Email any comments to me: doug@arizona.edu.
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Slapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #3

Doug Wellington
doug@arizona.edu

OK, you guys should be real good with the octave slap and pop, the pop and mute, and the slap, hammer, slap mute, so we'll get into some combinations today.

First, let's talk some more about muting. (Did I mention that muting is about the most important thing in the slap and pop style?) Last time, we did an octave slap and pop and let the notes ring. Let's clean up the sound now, by lifting the fretting finger after the slap or pop. You can either wait until just before playing the next note, thus holding the notes and making a long tone (legato) or you can stop the note quickly, making a short tone (staccato). Both sounds have their uses, but let's have you work on the staccato now. Play the same octave pattern we discussed last time (fifth fret of A string, seventh fret of G string), but instead of letting the notes ring, let up on the pressure almost immediately after you slap or pop, making each note a short tone. Just let up enough to stop the note from ringing. Don't actually take your finger off of the string. Again, set your metronome for a slow tempo, and make this sound good and clean.

```
     S = short tone                          O     O     O     O
                                            ---   ---   ---   ---
   S S S S S S S S                 __
|----7---7---7---7----|     |--/--\-------------------------------
|.--------------------.|     |  \   | .
|.-5---5---5---5-----.|     |---@--|-------------------------------
|---------------------|     |      / .
   S P S P S P S P          |-----/-------O-----O-----O-----O----
                            |    /
     S = Slap               |---/---------------------------------
     P = Pop                |
                            |-----------------------------------
```

Once you feel comfortable with that, let's add in that slap, hammer, slap and mute pattern we learned in lesson one. Stay at the same position. Slap two octave patterns starting at the fifth fret on the A string then slap the A string and hammer on to the seventh fret. Slap the open E string, then mute. Start up your metronome again and play this pattern, with all slaps occurring on the beat, and the pops, hammers and mutes occurring in between. Remember, we're still using quiet mutes. We'll get into slap-mutes in the next lesson.

```
                 O     O
                ---   ---

   __
|--/--\-----------------------------------------|
|  \   | .                                      |
|---@--|-----------------------------------------|
|      / .                  O                   |
|-----/-------O-----O-----O----------------------|
|    /                                           |
|---/-------------------------------------------|
|                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|
|                                                |
|                             -O-                |
|                                                |
|             S  S  S  S  L  L  L M              |  S = Short tone
|----------------7-----7-------------------------|  L = Long tone
|------------------------------------------------|  M = Mute
|-------------5-----5-----5--7-------------------|
|--------------------------------0---------------|
             S  P  S  P  S  H  S  M

             S = Slap
             P = Pop
             H = Hammer on
             M = Mute
```

Now, let's add a little movement to this line. Start the pattern on the fourth fret of the A string. Slap and pop one octave pattern, move up to the fifth fret of the A string, slap and pop an octave and then slap and hammer on the A string and slap and mute on the E string. Start slow and keep it clean!

```
                bO     O
                ---   ---

   __
|--/--\-------------------------------------------|
|  \   | .                                        |
|---@--|-------------------------------------------|
|      / .                   O                    |
|-----/------bO------O-----O---------------------|
|    /                                            |
|---/-------------------------------------------|
|                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|
|                                                 |
|                             -O-                 |
|                                                 |
|            S  S  S  S  L  L  L  M               |  S = Short tone
|----------------6-----7-------------------------|  L = Long tone
|-------------------------------------------------|  M = Mute
|-------------4-----5-----5--7-------------------|
|---------------------------------0----------------|
             S  P  S  P  S  H  S  M

             S = Slap
             P = Pop
             H = Hammer on
             M = Mute
```

Once you feel comfortable with that, try holding the slapped and popped octave notes for the whole duration (eighth notes) and see how this legato style changes the "feel". The legato notes should almost seem to drag. Playing staccato keeps things moving. Then, try playing the slaps as long tones and the pops as short tones. (I think this sounds best of all.) Also, try letting the last slap on the open E string ring. This sounds good at the end of a phrase or song. Experiment, and have fun.

Lastly, here's a simple pattern for you to play. See if you recognize it. HINT: it's part of a theme for a TV comedy show

Staccato:

```
|------5---------|---------------------|
|----------------|---------------------|
|---3------------|----1--2--3--3--3----|
|----------------|---------------------|
```

More again soon!
-Doug

Email any comments to me: doug@arizona.edu.
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Tapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #1

Ian Stephenson
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This is the first in a series of lessons on tapping and related techniques for bass guitar. I hope to explain both the physical side of things, and some of the theory behind the notes. I'm starting from ABSOLUTE basics so it should be very easy to follow - get this stuff nailed and the rest is easy too. Please mail me if you thing I'm going too fast or too slow. The very existence of this course depends on feedback - unless I know people are reading this then I won't even write part 2. I'll try and address any problems or suggestions I receive in future lessons.

Tapping is often seen as a technique used exclusively for solos but this isn't necessarily the case and I'll try and provide examples of each lesson point that demonstrates its use in a supporting SONG context. On a related note I will feel free to digress into other techniques as and when I feel that they are interesting or necessary to place a piece of tapping in context.

The techniques I'll outline form a PART of a good bass players toolbag. You don't have to be an experienced bass player to follow this course, but if you are starting from near absolute scratch then make sure you spend time acquiring other techniques. This stuff will sound great, and may make an audience notice you if the band is working well - but if you can't pedal quavers then the band isn't going to work, and you're just going to look daft.

Tapping can be roughly divided into two styles - the Billy Sheehan (+Eddie Van Halen) and the Stu Hamm (Joe Satriani) style. I'll touch on both, but concentrate on the latter, as it tends to be more harmonically driven, and is more applicable to a typical band situation.

OK - enough waffle lets start...

Sit down with your bass and with the index finger of your
LEFT hand play the A string at the 12th fret by hammering on (don't use your right hand at all):

```
                                __
|-----------------|     |--/--\-------O------------
|-----------------|     |  \   | .
|--12-------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
   H                    |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

Easy huh? Make sure that it sounds clean. Practise ending the note as well as starting it by lifting you finger a small fraction away from the fretboard so the string is damped. There should be no rattles, and the note should end when you want it to.

Now keep your left hand in about the same position and bring your right hand round so your elbow is over the bridge(ish), and your fingers are over the fretboard. Rest your thumb on the top side of the neck and place your fingers over the 14th fret - index finger over the D string, middle over the G string. This is your basic arm position (though like all basic things you'll grow to learn when not appropriate). Now bring your right index finger down onto the string to tap your first note.

```
                                        -O-

                                        ---
                                __
|-----------------|     |--/--\-------------------
|----14-----------|     |  \   | .
|-----------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
     T                  |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

Once again practise starting and stopping the note cleanly - it should be just as good as the note hammered with your left hand.

Now lets put those two together...

```
                                            -O-

                                            ---
                                __
|-----------------|     |--/--\----------O---------
|o------14-------o|     |  \   | .
```

```
|o--12-----------o|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .                .
    H1  T1              |-----/-------------------
                        |    /                    .
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

Repeat this until you feel comfortable with it. Listen to the sound of the interval (the gap between the notes) - I'll deal with this in a few weeks, but you should start listening now, so that you'll be ready.

Now its time to bring in another finger - the middle finger of your right hand. It should have been hanging over the 14th fret of the G string up till this point so try tapping there.

```
                                          O
                                         ---

                                         ---

                                         ---
                                  __
|------14---------|     |--/--\-------------------
|-----------------|     |  \   | .
|-----------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
       H2               |-----/-------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

Once you're comfortable with this, start put it together with the other notes.

First:

```
                                          O
                                         ---

                                         ---

                                         ---
                                  __
|-------14--------|     |--/--\-----O--------------
|-----------------|     |  \   | .
|---12------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
    H1  T2              |-----/-------------------
```

```
                          |    /
                          |---/----------------------
                          |
                          |--------------------------
```

Then:

```
                                          0
                                         ---

                                    -0-   ---

                                    ---   ---

                             __
|----------14-----|     |--/--\--------------------
|------14---------|     |  \   | .
|-----------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

And then finally:

```
                                           0
                                          ---

                                       -0- --- -0-

                                       --- --- ---

                             __
|----------14-----|     |--/--\-----0--------------
|------14------14-|     |  \   | .
|--12-------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

Loop all of these until you're completely comfortable with them - Your going to be able to play these in your sleep (with your eyes shut goes without saying - seriously! you shouldn't need to look at the fretboard, though it is excusable to start off with, or when learning something new).

[This might be a good time to take a break if you've had problems with the previous stuff - get it right before progressing]

Right now lets shift that whole pattern down a whole tone

```
                                          -O-

                                          ---
                                       O       O
                                      --- --- ---
                                 __
|---------12------|     |--/--\--------------------
|-----12------12--|     |  \   | . O
|-10--------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

Get that sorted, and we'll move down again...

```
                                           O
                                          ---

                                      -O- --- -O-
                                 __
|----------10-----|     |--/--\--------------------
|------10------10-|     |  \   | .
|--8--------------|     |---@--|---O---------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

Now as a final exercise lets put those last three together to form our first song:

```
   e  e  e  e  e  e  e  e    e e  e  e  s s s s  s s s s
|--------14----------12----|------10--------10-------12----|
|o----14----14----12----12-|---10----10---10--10---12--12-o|
|o-12----------10----------|-8----------8--------10-------o|
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
```

Next time the band play's All Along the WatchTower (in the key of A) you'll be able to hold down the chords, and keep the sound interesting during the guitar solo :-)

I'll develop this riff during the next lesson.

Have fun, and mail me when you get this far...
Ian Stehenson
ian@ohm.york.ac.uk

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Tapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #2

Ian Stephenson
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At the end of the last lesson you should have played the following riff from "All Along the WatchTower":

```
   e  e  e  e  e  e  e  e    e e  e  e  s s s s  s s s s
|--------14----------12----|------10--------10-------12----|
|o----14----14----12----12-|---10----10---10--10---12--12-o|
|o-12----------10----------|-8----------8--------10-------o|
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
```

While that's all very pretty, we need to get a little more intense as the song progresses. This lesson looks at two variations of this riff.

The technique we can apply to this riff is "Double Stopping" - playing more than one note at once.

Previously we brought two fingers of the right hand down separately. Now bring them down in exactly the same way, but both together.

```
                                          O
                                         ---

                                         -O-

                                         ---
                                  __
|-----14----------|      |--/--\--------------------
|-----14----------|      |  \   | .
|-----------------|      |---@--|-------------------
```

```
|-----------------|     |      / .
      T                 |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

You should find this fairly easy, and should be able to play:

```
   q    q      e  e  q       q    q     e   e    e   e
|-------14-----------12----|------10--------10-------12----|
|o------14-----------12----|----------------10-------12---o|
|o-12----------10-10-------|-8----------8--------10-------o|
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
   H3   T12    H1 H1 T12     H1   T12   H1  T12  H1  T12
```

Note I've marked an alternative left hand fingering here, using the third finger to fret the A at the 12th fret. This reduces the necessary hand movement, but you should make sure that you get the sound consistent between both fingers.

I've only notated the most basic of rhythms here. Playing it straight will give the heaviest sound, but the riff may be looped indefinitely so try shifting the rhythm around. You should be able to make the two hand parts "bounce off each other".

The notes we're playing are taken from the chords Am, G and F as follows

```
                 O
                ---     -O-
                                 O
                -O-     ---     ---
                         O
                -o-     ---     -O-
    __                   o

|--/--\----------O---|--------|----o----||
|  \   | .           |   O    |         ||
|---@--|-------------|--------|----O----||
|      / .           |        |         ||
|-----/--------------|--------|---------||
|    /               |        |         ||
|---/----------------|--------|---------||
|                    |        |         ||
|--------------------|--------|---------||
|                    |        |         ||
```

```
|                Am  |    G   |   F     ||
|                    |        |         ||
|                    |        |         ||
|-----------------14--|---12---|---10----||
|-----------------14--|---12---|---10----||
|-----------------12--|---10---|---8-----||
|--------------------|--------|---------||
```

(The Major and minor chords are differentiated by the notes I've indicated as "o" (little "o") - we're not playing those yet. You may like to analyse how this works)

Double Stopping will help to thicken the sound, but the basic problem with this riff is that if you play this, then nobody is playing the bass part! That's fine for a while, but not exactly great for the big intense ending.

The answer of course is to split your hands, and use the left hand to play the bass line one octave below where we've being playing it:

```
                                          O
                                         ---

                                         -O-

                                         ---

                                 __
|-----14----------|     |--/--\--------------------
|-----14----------|     |  \   | .
|-----------------|     |---@--|--------------------
|--5--------------|     |      / .
   H  T                 |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |            O
                        |--------------------------
```

That's pretty easy in itself, and gives a much fuller sound. Unfortunately you may find it a little harder when used in context.

```
   q    q      e  e  q       q    q     e   e    e   e
|-------14-----------12----|------10--------10-------12----|
|o------14-----------12----|----------------10-------12---o|
|o-------------------------|------------------------------o|
|--5-----------3-----------|-1----------1--------3---------|
   H2   T12    H1 H1 T12     H1   T12   H1  T12  H1  T12
```

This is will take some getting used to - particularly those of you who have been looking at the fretboard, as you can't watch both hands at once (I did warn you!). The only answer is familiarity with the bass - learning to feel your way round. Don't worry if you can't get this right now, but keep it in mind as something to practise, alongside future lessons.

The new chords may be written:

```
                 O
                ---     -O-
                                  O
                -O-     ---      ---
                         O
                -o-     ---      -O-
    __                   o

|--/--\----------o---|--------|----o----||
|  \   | .           |   o    |         ||
|---@--|-------------|--------|----o----||
|      / .       o   |        |         ||
|-----/--------------|---o----|---------||
|    /           o   |        |    o    ||
|---/----------------|---o----|---------||
|                O   |        |    o    ||
|--------------------|---O----|---------||
|                    |        |    O    ||
|                Am  |    G   |   F     ||
|                    |        |         ||
|                    |        |         ||
|----------------14--|---12---|---10----||
|----------------14--|---12---|---10----||
|--------------------|--------|---------||
|----------------5---|---3----|---1-----||
```

(Again I've marked notes that are implied as "o", played notes as "O"). Its pretty obvious why it sounds better.

Once you have mastered the splitting of your hands, you may like to try the first riff again with the bass line an octave down:

```
   e  e  e  e  e  e  e  e    e e  e  e  s s s s  s s s s
|--------14----------12----|------10--------10-------12----|
|o----14----14----12----12-|---10----10---10--10---12--12-o|
|o-------------------------|-------------------------------o|
|--5-----------3-----------|-1----------1--------3---------|
```

Particular effort must be put into playing the F at the first fret of the E string - Hammering on requires a little more effort close to the nut, as there is less available movement from the string (it being anchored not very far away). You may have to hit the string just a little harder (or those with rapid detuning machanisms may take the string down a tone - Kubickis are great for this, as the nut is moved while the note remains in the same place).

While very basic, these riffs are in fact quite hard, and should be enough to keep you occupied for quite a while.

More Hendrix stuff next time...
Ian

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Tapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #3

Ian Stephenson
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In the previous lessons we've used double stopping to form chords. We have also considered moving the left and right hand parts further apart. We'll continue with this idea now by moving the two hands even more independently.

Consider the following chord:

```
                                        -O-

                                        ---
                                         O
                                        ---
                          __
|-------12--------|     |--/--\--------------------
|-------12--------|     |  \   | .
|----7------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .   O
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

It should sound fairly dissonant, but provided your sound isn't overly bassy it won't be too bad in context.

We can then move the bass note (resolving it) to a G while keeping

```
the right hand harmony notes constant:

                                          -O-    -O-

                                          ---    ---
                                           O      O
                                          ---    ---
                                  __
|-----12-----12---|      |--/--\--------------------
|o----12-----12--o|      |  \   | .
|o-7-------------o|      |---@--|-------------------
|---------3-------|      |      / .  O
                         |-----/--------------------
                         |    /
                         |---/----------------------
                         |
                         |-------------------O------


Once you're happy moving your left hand while holding your right
still, we can move to an Am in the same way we did last week to get
the classic opening riff to "Purple Haze" (or at least sufficient
outline to carry the rhythm while the guitarist shows off)

                                                          O
                 -O-    -O-                -O-            ---

                 ---    ---                ---            -O-
                  O      o                  O
                 ---    ---                ---            ---
    __
|--/--\-------------------------|--------------------------------||
|  \   | .                      |                                ||
|---@--|------------------------|--------------------------------||
|      / .  O O       O     O   |                                ||
|-----/-------------------------|--------------------------------||
|    /                          |                                ||
|---/---------------------------|--------------------------------||
|                               |                O  O            ||
|-------------------------------|--O--O-------------------------||
|                               |                                ||
|          e  e  e  s   s+q q   |  e  e  q      e   e    q       ||
|                               |                                ||
|-----------------12-----12-----|--------12---------------14-----||
|o----------------12-----12-----|--------12---------------14-----||
```

```
|o----------7--7------7------7--|-------------------------------||
|-------------------------------|--3--3----------5--5-----------||
           L4 L4 R12 L4 R12 L4    L1 L1 R12     L3 L3   R12
```

(The timings are an approximation - with all lessons you should experiment to find a comfortable groove).

Once you've got this working you may feel that the initial E lacks the emphasis you'd like to place upon the begining of such a great riff.

Last week we tackled the problem by taking the note down an octave. In this case that's an open string so we can't hammer it on. We could tune down, but the proximity of the nut would reduce the volume, and in any case - tuning down is inconvenient. The answer is to sound the open E with your right hand.

Moving in and out of the position used for tapping is often inconvenient - going to a walking finger style is too slow, and a plectrum is out of the question! However, you should find that your right hand is in a pretty good position to slap the bottom E - it's perhaps a little further up the fretboard than is desirable but it is quite workable (See Doug's slapping lesson #1 for details of the VERY simple slap we're now going to use). Simply twist your right hand, bring the thumb down on the E string and let it bounce back.

Of course if the right hand is slapping then the left hand is going to have to play the double stop. This is accomplished by bringing your third finger down flat across the G and D strings at the 12th fret. With both this and the slap, experiment to find the optimum amount of force.

```
                                          -O-    -O-


                                          ---    ---
                                           O      O
                                          ---    ---
                              __

|-------12-----12---|   |--/--\--------------------
|o------12-----12--o|   |  \   | .
|o-----------------o|   |---@--|-------------------
|--0--0-----0-------|   |      / .
```

```
                        |-----/--------------------
   RT RT L3 RT L3       |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |

                        |--------------------------
                                 -O- -O-   -O-
```

Putting the whole thing back together we get:

```
                                                          O
                -O-    -O-               -O-            ---

                ---    ---               ---            -O-
                 O      o                 O
                ---    ---               ---            ---

    __

|--/--\-------------------------|--------------------------------||
|  \   | .                      |                                ||
|---@--|------------------------|--------------------------------||
|      / .                      |                                ||
|-----/------------------------|--------------------------------||
|    /                          |                                ||
|---/---------------------------|--------------------------------||
|                               |                O  O            ||
|-------------------------------|--O--O-------------------------||
|                               |                                ||
|          -O--O-   -O-     -O- |                                ||
|                               |                                ||
|           e  e  e  s   s+q q  |  e  e  q      e   e    q       ||
|                               |                                ||
|-----------------12-----12-----|--------12--------------14-----||
|o----------------12-----12-----|--------12--------------14-----||
|o------------------------------|--------------------------------||
|-----------0--0------0------0--|--3--3----------5--5-----------||
            RT RT L3  RT L3  RT    L1 L1 R12     L3 L3   R12
```

That's all for now.
Ian

LESSON POINTS: Increased independance of hands
                Mixing conventional right hand techniques

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Tapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #4

Ian Stephenson
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Virtually all the notes that we've been playing so far have been related harmonically as either fifths or octaves. This is largely because at bass frequencies, smaller intervals do not give a sufficient gap (in terms of Hertz) to allow your ear to tell them apart. This can be most clearly seen on a piano where the left hand (the bass) often plays octaves while the right plays a much closer harmony (usually thirds or less). If you were to play thirds at bass frequencies they would sound a muddy mess.

If we look a little more closely at the idea of left hand fifths, there are two ways they can be played in the context of the tapping we've done so far. We can either place the root on the E or the A string. We'll consider each of these in turn.

We'll use the A Major Chord (as it's the one we're most familiar with), so placing the root on the E string, and tapping the fifth and octave on the top strings we get:

```
                                        O
                                       ---

                                       -O-

                                       ---
                                  __
|--------14-------|     |--/--\--------------------
|--------14-------|     |  \   | .
|-----------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|----5------------|     |      / .
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |           O
                        |--------------------------
```

The fifth of the A chord is E. This is easiest played on the seventh fret of the A string, so we may alternate between this and the root.

```
                                          O      O
                                         ---    ---

                                         -O-    -O-

                                         ---    ---
                                          __
|-------14-----14-|     |--/--\--------------------
|-------14-----14-|     |  \   | .
|-----------7-----|     |---@--|-------------------
|----5------------|     |      / .           O
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |            O
                        |--------------------------
```

Looping this round should give you a pretty good idea of where we're heading this week.

The alternative to placing the root on the E string is to play the root on the A string. We can't play this using open strings, as you can't hammer on an open string, so we'll play this at the twelfth fret

```
                                          O
                                         ---

                                         -O-

                                         ---
                                          __
|-------14--------|     |--/--\------O-------------
|-------14--------|     |  \   | .
|----12-----------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

We've played that plenty of times, so we can quickly add the fifth on the E string. Moving up a fifth is harmonically the same is moving down a fourth, so this note is again found at the twelfth fret.

```
                                          O      O
                                         ---    ---
```

```
                                          -O-    -O-

                                          ---    ---
                                  __
|-------14-----14-|     |--/--\------O-------------
|-------14-----14-|     |  \   | .
|----12-----------|     |---@--|-------------------
|----------12-----|     |      / .           O
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
                        |--------------------------
```

This is the same E as we previously played on the A string, 7th fret, but now the A is above it, and we've reached it by moving down. This is particularly obvious when we move between the two patterns:

```
                 O      O       O      O
                ---    ---     ---    ---

                -O-    -O-     -O-    -O-

                ---    ---     ---    ---
    __
|--/--\------O-----------------------------------|
|  \   | .                                       |
|---@--|-----------------------------------------|
|      / .           O              O            |
|-----/-----------------------------------------|
|    /                                          |
|---/-------------------------------------------|
|                            O                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|
|                                               |
|                                               |
|                                               |
|----------------14-----14------14----14---------|
|----------------14-----14------14----14---------|
|------------12--------------------7-------------|
|-------------------12-------5-------------------|
```

When we move between chords we can choose which INVERSION we use to minimize hand movement, and to keep the bass line moving in a melodic fashion. In the following example we move from a C major chord with the C on the A string, playing a G on the string below (this is known as 2nd inverson), to an A minor root position (A at the bottom on the E string, with a fifth on the A string).

```
                 O      O
                ---    ---
                                        O      O
                -0-    -0-            ---    ---

                ---    ---            -O-    -O-

                ---    ---            ---    ---

    __
|--/--\-----------------------|---------------------|
|  \   | .                    |                     |
|---@--|----------------------|---------------------|
|      / .                   .|.         O          |
|-----/----------------------|---------------------|
|    /       O               .|.                    |
|---/------------------------|---------------------|
|                            |   O                 |
|--------------------0-------|---------------------|
|                                                  |
|                                                  |
|                                                  |
|----------------17-----17---|------14-----14------|
|----------------17-----17---|------14-----14------|
|------------3---------------|----------7----------|
|---------------------3-------|---5-----------------|
```

This vamp forms the basis of the Stu Hamm track "Country Music (A Night in Hell)". Repeat it round until you've got a really comfortable rhythm going.

Before considering the whole tab we need one more trick - a major third for the right hand. I'll cover these in more detail next time, but for now place your right hand in a position to play a fourth (as we have done so far), and just stretch your middle finger a little further so it plays one fret further down:

```
                                                O
                                               ---    #0-

                                               -0-    -0-

                                               ---    ---

                                 __
|---14-----13-----|     |--/--\--------------------
|---14-----14-----|     |  \   | .
|-----------------|     |---@--|-------------------
|-----------------|     |      / .
                        |-----/--------------------
                        |    /
                        |---/----------------------
                        |
```

```
                          |--------------------------
```

You should now have few problems with the full rhythm part to "Country music". It's mostly based on the stuff we've covered this week. Watch out for the slapped parts (marked with a T). You should be able to slap these without moving your hand too far away from the tapping position (see lesson 3).

```
|---------|---17---17---17---17-----|---17---17---17---17-----|
|---------|---17---17---17---17-----|---17---17---17---17-----|
|-------2-|-3---------3-------------|-3---------3-------------|
|-3--5----|------3---------3--------|------3---------3--------|
  T  T  T

|---14---14---14---14-----|---17---17---17-17---17-----|
|---14---14---14---14-----|---17---17---17-17---17-----|
|------7---------7--------|-3---------3----------------|
|-5---------5-------------|------3------------3--------|


|---14---14---14---14-----|---17---17---17---17-----|
|---14---14---14---14-----|---17---17---17---17-----|
|------7---------7--------|-3---------3----5--------|
|-5---------5-------------|------3------------------|


|---16---16---16---16-----|-------------------------|---||
|---17---17---17---17-----|-------------------------|---||
|------5---------5--------|-----------2--3--------2-|-3-||
|-3---------3-------------|--3--3--5--------3--5----|---||

                            T  T  T  T  T  T  T  T   T
```

Have Fun
Ian

LESSON POINTS: Left Hand Fifths
Introduction to Right hand Major Thirds

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Tapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #5

Ian Stephenson
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Last time we just touched upon the all important technique of tapping major thirds. Physically it's pretty straight forward, and you should have mastered it with few problems. This week we'll consider how the interval is used within simple chords. To do this I'll need to run over some basic music theory - I hope it doesn't scare anyone too much.

Previously all the right hand paterns that we've considered have been based on the interval of a fourth (thats five frets!). This is the easiest interval to tap, as it's the interval between adjacent strings. It's the interval between the root and the fourth note of the scale, but is harmonically more common as the interval between the fifth and the octave:

```
                                  -O-
    __                          O
|--/--\-------------------O--------
|  \   | .             O
|---@--|------------O--------------
|      / .       O
|-----/-------O--------------------
|    /     O
|---/------------------------------
|
|-----------------------------------
           1  2  3  4  5  6  7  O
           ^        ^  ^        ^
           \______/   \______/
              4th         4th
```

Triads (the basic three note building blocks of chords) are formed by

starting on a note of a scale, and playing every other note above that. If we consider the key of C Major (as it has no sharps or flats), and start on the first note (ie C) we get the notes C, E and G.

```
                                                  -(O)-
                      __
                  |--/--\-----------------------------
                  |  \   | .             O
                  |---@--|-----------------------------
                  |      / .       O
                  |-----/-----------------------------
                  |    /     O
                  |---/-------------------------------
                  |
                  |-----------------------------------
                             1  2  3  4  5  6  7  O
                                          ^        ^
                                          \_______/
                                             4th
```

This shows clearly how 4ths are important in basic (ie I'm generalising, and glossing over things) harmony. Where ever we start on the scale we always form triads in the same way by skipping every other note:

```
                                                O
                                            -O- ---
                                        O
                                    -O- --- --- -O-
                                O           O
                            -O- --- --- -O- --- -O-
                      __            O       O
                  |--/--\--------O-------O-------O------
                  |  \   | . O       O       O
                  |---@--|-------O-------O--------------
                  |      / . O       O
                  |-----/--------O----------------------
                  |    /     O
                  |---/----------------------------------
                  |
                  |-------------------------------------
                             1   2   3   4   5   6
```

(Note I left the 7ths out - they work slightly differently, but that's for another time!).

No matter which note you start on you'll always find a fourth interval at the top of the chord between the fifth and the octave.

A Major third is found between the root and the third degree of a Major scale, so going back to our C Major example:

```
                                                  -O-
                    __                          O
                |--/--\--------------------O--------
                |  \   | .             O
                |---@--|------------O--------------
                |      / .       O
                |-----/-------O--------------------
                |    /     O
                |---/-------------------------------
                |
                |-----------------------------------
                          1  2  3  4  5  6  7  O
                          ^     ^
                          \____/
                          Maj 3rd
```

Hence we find a Major third at the bottom of all Major chords. However, we have to be a bit more careful with thirds than we do with fourths, because if we start on a different degree of the scale we get a different interval between the notes of our triads. The reasons for this are a bit complex, but the results can be most clearly seen by considering a piano keyboard:

```
=========================================
|   | |  | |   |   | |  | |  | |   |    |
|   | |  | |   |   | |  | |  | |   |    |
|   | |  | |   |   | |  | |  | |   |    |
|   +++  +++   |   +++  +++  +++   |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| C  | D  | E  | F  | G  | A  | B  | C  |
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
+----+----+----+----+----+----+----+----+
```

If you start at C and count the number of semitones between it and its third (E) you'll find you move 4 steps. However, if you count the number of steps between D and its third, F (remember there are no sharps or flats in the key of C) you'll find there are only three steps. If you work it out (as I suggest that you do) you'll find that C, F and G have four steps to their third, while D, E and A have only three (as I said before - ignore B, it's a bit odd).

As you've probably guessed, 4 steps are a Major third, and hence C, F and G are Major chords in the key of C Major. A three semitone gap is a Minor third, and therefore D, E and A are minor chords. To generalise this, in a major key the chords I, IV and V are Major, and the chords II, III and VI are minor.

As a final twist before moving on to some fretboard based examples, look again at the C Major chord, but this time consider the interval between the third (E) and the Fifth (G). Count the semitones and you'll find you've got a MINOR third. If you look at a MINOR chord (D minor) you'll find that the interval between its third and fifth is a MAJOR third! This gives us a neat trick where we can use the same Major third interval to play completely different roles in two chords - say Amin (ACE) and CMaj (CEG) - A Minor is the RELATIVE MINOR of C Major.

If we play an E at the 12th fret we can tap its octave on the 14th fret. By stretching the middle finger a little further than we would for a fourth we can comfortably tap the third (g#) at the 13th fret.

```
                                          (#)-O-

                                             -O-

                                             ---
                        __
                    |--/--\----------------------------
                    |  \   | .  #
|------13-------|   |---@--|--#-----------------------
|------14-------|   |      / .       O
|---------------|   |-----/----------------------------
|---12----------|   |    /     #
       T            |---/------------------------------
                    |
                    |----------------------------------
```

From here we could easily move to the other major chords of this key (A and B - IV and V remember) by moving the bass note up a string, and tapping fourth intervals. However, we can alternatively bring in the relative minor (C#) by just moving the bass note:

```
                                          (#)-O-

                                             -O-

                                             ---
```

```
                        __
                    |--/--\----------------------------
                    |  \   | .  #
|------13-------|   |---@--|--#-------------------------
|------14-------|   |      / .
|---------------|   |-----/----------------------------
|---9-----------|   |    /     #     O
       T            |---/------------------------------
                    |
                    |-----------------------------------
```

If we string these four chords together we get:

```
                                                                  -O-
                                                          O
                     -O-             -O-             ---           ---
                                                                 O     O
                 -O- --- -O-     -O- --- -O-     -O- --- -O-    ---------

                 --- --- ---     --- --- ---     --- --- ---    ---------
   __                                                          O
|--/--\----------------------|---------------|-O-------------|-----------|
|  \   | .  #                |               |               |           |
|---@--|--#------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
|      / .     O             |               |               |          .|
|-----/----------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
|    /     #                 | O             |               |          .|
|---/------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
|                            |               |               |           |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
|             E              | C#m           | A             | B         |
|                            |               |               |           |
|---------------------13-----|--------13-----|--------14-----|-----16----|
|-----------------14------14-|----14------14-|-----14----14--|---16--16-o|
|----------------------------|---------------|-12------------|-14-------o|
|-------------12-------------|-9-------------|---------------|-----------|
```

All very well I hear you say, but it's hardly rock'n'roll. Well Satch knows a good thing when he sees it, and he used a very simple Relative Minor trick on the main riff from the track "A Day at the Beach (New rays from an ancient sun)" on "Flying in a Blue Dream":

```
|---------16-------14-------12-------14-------16-------|
|o-----5--17----5--14----5--12----5--14----5--17------o|
|o-----------------------------------------------------o|
|---3--------3--------3--------3--------3---------(7)--|
```

```
                                                        ^Second Time

|---------16-------14-------12-------14-------16-------|
|o-----9--17----9--14----9--12----9--14----9--17------o|
|o-----------------------------------------------(5)-o|
|---7--------7--------7--------7--------7--------------|
                                                        ^Second Time
```

This isn't strictly accurate (I've changed the key, and simplified it somewhat), but it clearly illustrates how the Major third is used in two roles - as part of the G Major chord in the first section, and then as part of the relative minor E minor chord in the second section. Notice how the right hand is identical for both sections, but by moving the bass note we change the sound completely.

I hope that this all made some kind of sense to you all. I've covered a lot of information this week - don't worry if it didn't all sink in straight away, it'll take time before you feel comfortable with it. However, I think you need to at least have seen this stuff to get the most from tapping. Going polyphonic gives you a lot greater choice of notes to play, theory gives you some sort of hints as to what might work.

If this does cause you a great deal of hassle then send me some email, and I'll try and clear up any gray areas. I had this stuff drummed into me about ten years ago so I'm not really sure how much of a challenge this will present to those of you who haven't seen it before (That which is obvious does not need discussing! - cool quote :-)).

Don't Panic
Ian

LESSON POINTS: Triads (Chord Construction)
Major Thirds
Relative Minors

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Tapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #6

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Having covered the third pretty thoroughly last time, we're now going to consider the interval of a fifth - largely from a practical point of view, I'm sure some of you will be glad to hear!

Fifths are found throughout the major scale (any note, except the 7th, and the note 4 places above it form a "perfect" fifth). However, more importantly right now - a fifth is found between the root and the third note of any triad:

```
                                        -O-
                  __
              |--/--\-----------------------------
              |  \   | .             O
              |---@--|----------------------------
              |      / .       O
              |-----/-----------------------------
              |    /     O
              |---/-----------------------------
              |
              |-----------------------------------
                         1     3     5
                         ^           ^
                         \___________/
                              5th
```

Quite usefully, because of the way major and minor thirds combine to form major and minor chords, it doesn't matter if the chord is major or minor - the fifth is always the same. It's (almost) always safe to play a fifth! Often in rock the chord is left unspecified (Maj/Min), as this sounds good on an overdriven guitar. Hence the root and fifth together form the basis of the rock guitarist's arsenal - the Power Chord.

OK - enough waffling. I promised this would be a practical lesson so let's play some fifths.

Hammer on (with your left hand) an E at the twelfth fret of the E string. Now play its octave at the 14th fret of the D string with your right index finger as normal, but raise your elbow slightly to angle your arm more, and play a B at the 16th fret of the G string with your third finger. You might also find it useful to angle your wrist down a little so your fingers run diagonally across the fretboard.

```
                                                  -O-

                                                  ---

                                             -O-  ---

                                             ---  ---
                          __
                     |--/--\----------------------------
                     |  \   | .  #
|---------16----|    |---@--|--#-----------------------
|------14-------|    |      / .       O
|---------------|    |-----/------#---------------------
|---12----------|    |    /     #
       T  T          |---/------------------------------
                     |
                     |----------------------------------
```

Once comfortable with that try playing both notes at once:

```
                                             -O-

                                             ---

                                             -O-

                                             ---
                          __
                     |--/--\----------------------------
                     |  \   | .  #
|-------16------|    |---@--|--#-----------------------
|-------14------|    |      / .       O
|---------------|    |-----/------#---------------------
|---12----------|    |    /     #
        T            |---/------------------------------
                     |
```

```
                    |----------------------------------
```

Harmonically, we can use a fifth anywhere we would use a fourth (as moving up a fifth is equivalent to dropping down a fourth and vice versa), so to go back to an old standby we could play:

```
                    -O-
                                    O                                   O
                    ---             ---            -O-         -O-    ---

                -O- --- -O-         ---            ---         ---    ---
                                O       O                           O   O
                --- --- ---     --- --- ---    -O- --- -O-   -O- -O---- ---
    __
|--/--\----------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
|  \   | .  #                |               |              |                |
|---@--|--#------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
|      / .     O             |               |              |             . |
|-----/------#---------------|-O-------------|--------------|-------O--------|
|    /     #                 |               | O            | O            . |
|---/-----------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
|                           |               |              |                |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
|            E              | D             | C            | C     D        |
|                           |               |              |                |
|---------------------16-----|--------14-----|-------12-----|----12-----14---|
|-----------------14------14-|----12------12-|----10----10--|--10--10-12--12-|
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
|-------------12-------------|-10------------|-8------------|-8-----10-------|
```

Yes, it's "All Along the WatchTower" AGAIN! However, this is the second most common chord pressing in rock music so it's worth learning to play well (Try listening out for it sometime - it's everywhere!). Go back to the previous exercises and try applying the variations we applied to them to this new version (remember we're now playing it in the key of E, but the previous version was in A).

If you compare the two versions of this progression (fourths vs. fifths), you'll probably find you prefer the old version. Excessive use of fifths tends to sound thin (at least in this context), so they're usually used only in passing and as part of more complex chords (you'll see what I mean next time).

Because of this, it's hard to find a good final example that uses fifths to a great extent. The example I've chosen is the end of the bass intro to "Had Enough" by Mr. Big, and uses both left and right hand double

stopped fifths. The full intro is pretty hairy, but this bit is quite easy and is instantly recognizable:

```
                                                          Harm.....
|---16----------------|--16-----------|----------------|-----5-------|
|---14----------------|--14-----------|----0-2-0-2-----|--3-----5----|
|-------12----10------|-----12---10---|----------------|-------------|
|-------10----8-------|-----10---8----|-0--------------|-------------|
    T   H     H          T  H    H           H P H
```

You should now be able to put together most basic chord progressions, by playing roots (and perhaps fifths) with your left hand, and by playing fourths (5th + Octave), Thirds (Root + Third), and Fifths (Root + Fifth) with your right. For homework, try working out some I, IV, V progressions with the root on both the E and A strings, and using, in turn, each of the right hand intervals you've seen here.

For example, in the key of A, you could start in any of these places:

```
|-----14-------| |-----21-------| |-----18-------|
|-----14-------| |-----19-------| |-----19-------|
|--------------| |--------------| |--------------|
|--5-----------| |--5-----------| |--5-----------|

|--------------| |--------------| |--------------|
|-----7--------| |-----14-------| |-----11-------|
|-----7--------| |-----12-------| |-----12-------|
|--5-----------| |--5-----------| |--5-----------|

|-----14-------| |-----21-------| |-----18-------|
|-----14-------| |-----19-------| |-----19-------|
|--12----------| |--12----------| |--12----------|
|--------------| |--------------| |--------------|
```

Enjoy...
Ian

LESSON POINTS: Right Hand Fifths

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Tapping on Bass Guitar Lesson #7

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The interval of a fifth, which we considered last time, sounds weak when used extensively, so this week we'll examine how it can be combined with the fourth interval we've previously used to produce what is probably the most useful of all right hand tapping patterns.

Play an A chord at the twelfth fret as usual, then follow it with a fifth based pattern similar to the one we looked at last time:

```
                                                                  -O-
                                                        O
                                                       ---    ---  ---

                                                  -O-  ---    -O-  ---

                                                  ---  ---    ---  ---
                                 __
                            |--/--\----------O------------O---------
                            |  \   | .  #
|-------14-------16-|       |---@--|--#-----------------------------
|----14-------14----|       |      / .
|-12-------12-------|       |-----/---------------------------------
|-------------------|       |    /     #
     T  T     T  T          |---/-----------------------------------
                            |
                            |----------------------------------------
```

Now rather than keeping your fingers straight, play the fifth by hooking your third finger round behind your middle finger. With practise you should find a hand position which is a comfortable compromise between the the fourth and

fifth hand positions you've been using previously. By using this hand position you can smoothly mix both fourths and fifths to provide passing notes:

```
                                                                  /--\
                                                                -O-
                                                        O           O       O
                                                       ---     --- ---     ---

                                                   -O- --- -O- --- --- -O- ---

                                                   --- --- --- --- --- --- ---
                                  __
                              |--/--\--------O---------------------------
                              |  \   | .  #
|---------14----16-14----14-|   |---@--|--#--------------------------------
|------14----14-------14----|   |      / .
|---12----------------------|   |-----/-------------------------------------
|---------------------------|   |    /     #
       T1 T2 T1 T3 T2 T1 T2     |---/-----------------------------------------
                                |
                                |-------------------------------------------
```

The B-A transition is a pull-off. You should be able to remove your third finger from the string cleanly enough to leave the A ringing, and to provide a smooth transition between the notes. Make sure your timing is tight on this example - in particular there should be no delay in shifting between hand positions. In fact there should be very little hand movement involved once you've found the correct technique.

This fingering position is VERY important. It crops up everywhere, but its main uses (in terms of chord construction) are in resolving suspended fourths:

```
                                                        -O-
                                                   O
                                                  ---   ---

                                             -O-  ---   ---

                                             ---  ---   ---
                          __
                      |--/--\--------------------------------
                      |  \   | .  #
|-----------14--16--|   |---@--|--#---------------------------
|-------14----------|   |      / .       O
|-------------------|   |-----/------#------------------------
|---12--------------|   |    /     #
```

```
        T   T   T       |---/-----------------------------------
                        |
                        |-------------------------------------
                                        Root    Fourth
                                           Octave    Fifth
```

And outlining ninth chords:

```
                                                 -O-
                                              O
                                             ---   ---

                                           -O-  ---   ---

                                           ---  ---   ---

                          __
                        |--/--\----------O---------------------
                        |  \   | .  #
|-----------14--16--|   |---@--|--#----------------------------
|-------14----------|   |      / .
|---12--------------|   |-----/-----------------------------
|-------------------|   |    /     #
        T   T   T       |---/-----------------------------------
                        |
                        |-------------------------------------
                                        Root   Octave
                                           Fifth      Ninth
```

Ninth chords are very important on bass, as the large intervals involved prevent the sound from being muddy, while still providing a complex sound. I hope to cover them in more detail in a later lesson.

To avoid confusion with fourth and fifth hand positions, I'll probably refer to this hand position as a ninth position, regardless of the harmonic role it's playing.

OK, time for the examples.

The first example is a pattern I sometimes use for the middle section of "Panama" (Van Halen). The section is pretty quiet, and can sometimes drag - depending on the atmosphere, this riff can pick things up nicely and fill in the gap.

```
|-----21----21----23-21---21-|-21----21----23-21----21--|
|o-------21----21-------21---|----21----21-------21-----|
|o----7----------------------|--------------5------------|
```

```
|-----------------------------|-----------------------8---|
                              \___/                   \___

|-----21----21----23-21---21-|-21----21----23-21----21--|
|--------21----21-------21---|----21----21-------21----o|
|-----------------------------|-------------5--------8--o|
|-----8-----------------------|---------------------------|
  ___/                        \___/                   \___
```

The final example this week is an all time fave of mine - Stu Hamm's "Kings of Sleep". This makes repeated use of the ninth position, while the left hand plays the bass line. Note how the same right hand notes play different roles within the chord depending on the bass note.

This version is written for a standard bass - those with Kubicki's can use the extender, and drop some of the notes down one octave to be consistant with the record. Alternatively non-kubicki users could raise everything one tone.

```
                                                                  Repeat
|---14----16-----|----14--------|---14----16---------|---14-------------|
|------14--------|-------14-----|------14------------|------14----------|
|-------------4--|--------------|-5------------7-/9--|-7---------7-9-7--|
|-5--------------|-2------------|--------------------|------------------|
  H T  T  T   H  | H  T  T      | H T  T  T    H  S  | P T  T    H H P  |


                                                                    DC
|---14----16-----|---14--------------|---14----16------|---14-----------|
|------14-----11-|------14--------11-|------14-----11--|------14--------|
|-9--------------|-9--------11-12----|-9---------------|-9--------------|
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
  H T  T  T   H  | H  T  T  H  H  H  | H T  T  T   H   | H T  T  H H  P |
```

Enjoy...

Ian

LESSON POINTS: Ninth Right Hand Position

Previous tapping and slapping lessons are available via FTP from KAPPA.RICE.EDU in the directory /pub/bass/lessons. If you do not have FTP, and wish to retrieve the lessons via email, send mail to ftpmail@decwrl.dec.com with the message "help".

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Bass frontiers - A world-wide publication featuring information on bassists both acoustic and electric. This is the index page for the new issue.

Guitar World Magazine - While mostly a guitar oriented magazine, Guitar World contains bass tablature in the song transcriptions.

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Bottom Feeder - Bass player interviews, tablature, links, pictures...

PlayTheBass.com - free staff paper, flash cards, desktop pictures/screen savers, posters, web links database, lessons, and more.

TalkBass.com - Community based site with over 15,000 active members. Large tablature archive and bass link section.

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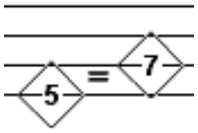
First Fret

Tuning the electric bass with harmonics

Tuning the rest of the strings



Play the 5th fret harmonic on the 4th string, then play the 7th fret harmonic on the 3rd string. The trick is to make sure that both of the notes are ringing at the same time. So you may want to use your right hand thumb rather than you finger, so that you don't accidentally stop the 4th string when you pluck the 3rd string. Watch this video of me tuning the 3rd string.

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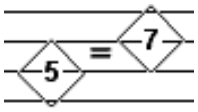
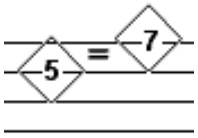


Next play the 5th fret harmonic on the 5th string, then play the 7th fret harmonic on the 4th string.



Then play the 5th fret harmonic on the 4th string, and the 7th fret harmonic on the 3rd string.

Page 1, tuning the 4th string

Page 3, putting it all together

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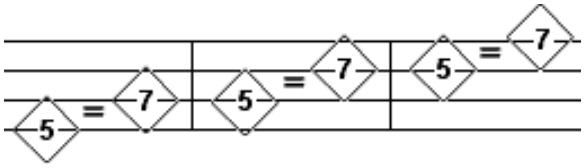
First Fret

Tuning the electric bass with harmonics

Putting it all together

This diagram shows all of the notes to use when tuning with harmonics.



Video of the harmonic tuning process

RealPlayer Video
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Page 2, tuning the rest of the strings

Page 1, tuning the 4th string

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First Fret

Basic tuning for the electric bass

Tuning the rest of the strings

Once you have your 4th string in tune, you are going to tune the rest of the strings from there.

Play the note on the 4th string, 5th fret. Listen to the note, then try and tune the 3rd string until it matches that pitch (A).

Watch this video of tuning the 3rd string.

RealPlayer Video
(130K)
get realplayer

If you use your left hand to tune the string, you will have to remember what the note you are aiming for sounds like. This is difficult for many beginning bass players, so here is an option that may help. Use your right hand to tune, therefore you will be hearing both notes at the same time as you are tuning. This will let you here the "crashing" of the two notes together. As you get closer to being in tune the crashing will get further away, until it stops and you are in tune.

Watch this video of tuning the 3rd string using your right hand.

RealPlayer Video
(120K)
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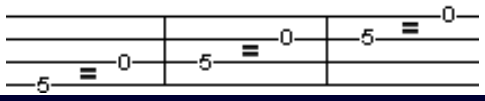
Use the same method to tune the rest of the strings.

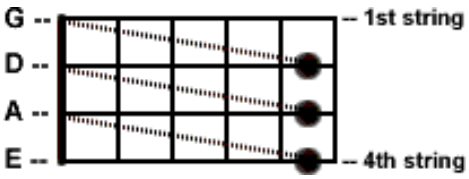
Play the note on the 3rd string, 5th fret. This should be the same note as the 2nd string open (D).

Play the note on the 2nd string, 5th fret. This should be the same note as the 1st string open (G).

Tablature of the basic relative tuning method



Basic relative tuning in chord chart format



This video shows going through the whole process of matching the pitches on each set of strings.

RealPlayer Video
(97K)
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Page 1, Tuning the 4th string

Page 3, Tuning the electric bass with a piano

Basic electric bass tuning jump zone

Tuning the 4th string
Tuning the rest of the strings
Tuning with a piano
Electronic tuners
Using a tuning fork

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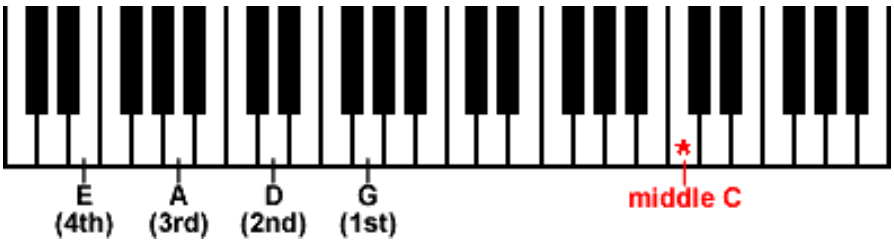
First Fret

Basic tuning for the electric bass

Tuning the electric bass to a piano

Of course this assumes that the piano is in tune. Sometimes trying to tune to a piano that has not been tuned in years can do more harm than good.



* One important thing to know about the bass, especially if you have played another instrument. Music for the bass sounds an octave lower than where it is written. If you try and tune the bass to the piano thinking that they are exactly the same, you would be trying to tune the bass an octave higher than where it should be.

Page 2, Tuning the rest of the strings

Page 4, Electronic tuners

Basic electric bass tuning jump zone

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First Fret

Basic tuning for the electric bass

Electronic Tuners

In the last few years the price of electronic tuners has dropped drastically. At the same time, the reliability has gone up. Currently you can buy a decent electronic tuner for under $25 (US). Tuning by ear takes some practice, so a good option for tuning your bass when you are first starting out is to buy an electronic tuner. Below we are going to take a look at some things to look for in a tuner, and then how to use it.

There are good tuners and bad tuners, just like everything else in this world. I would suggest getting a digital tuner, with both a needle indication, and some sort of lights to tell you that you are either to high or to low.

Electronic tuners that you can use for guitar/bass come in two varieties. The first is one that allows you to tune the 6 strings of the guitar as well as the 4 string of the bass to standard pitch. The other is a chromatic tuner, which will allow you to tune to any note, not just those in standard tuning. Of course in this day and age songs are often tuned down a 1/2 step (The equivalent of 1 fret lower). There are also many alternate tunings in use, therefore the chromatic tuner is the way to go. Chromatic tuners are also easier to use, even if you are just tuning to standard pitch.

How to use a standard guitar/bass tuner

Using an electronic tuner should be self explanatory, right? Well, not really. Here is something to remember about using a standard guitar/bass tuner. Unless the string that you are tuning is within a 1/2 step of the correct pitch, the tuner will not know what to tell you. For instance, if you are tuning your 4th string (E) and it is tuned to an F (which is a 1/2 step to high), the needle will not register anything. Worse yet the default position of the needle is to the left, so many people think that this automatically means that they are too low. Then they proceed to tune the string up, and up, until the string breaks, or the neck looks like a bow from the tension of the string.. A standard guitar/bass tuner is only good as a fine tuning tool, and unless you can tune by ear enough to get you within a 1/2 step, it is useless.

Here are a couple of standard electric guitar/bass tunes that I recommend to my students. They are cheap, and are good tuners.

Qwik Tune QT-8 Guitar/Bass Lightning Tuner

Qwik Tune QT-1 Auto Tuner

Of course, I would really recommend getting a chromatic tuner. That way you have the option of tuning to any note. Another advantage is that you do not need to be within a 1/2 step of the correct pitch, just somewhere in the area of the right octave. If, for instance, you were tuning your 4th string (E) and it was tuned to an F, you would see that it was it was an F and know to tune it down. You will need to have a basic knowledge of sharps and flats and the names of the notes on the guitar.

All of the chromatic notes

A	**A#/Bb**	**B**	**C**	**C#/Db**	**D**	**D#/Eb**	**E**	**F**	**F#/Gb**	**G**	**G#/Ab**

When you are tuning, try and think about whether it would be closer to go up, or down to the note that you are trying to tune to. If you were trying to tune your 4th string to **D**, but your electronic tuner was registering a **C**, you would need to tune up.

Here is the chromatic tuner I would recommend. No, I do not work for the Quik Tune company, they just make a cheap, good tuner.

Qwik Tune QT-2 Chromatic Tuner

Page 3, tuning the electric bass with a piano

Page 5, using a tuning fork

Basic electric bass tuning jump zone

Tuning the 4th string
Tuning the rest of the strings
Tuning with a piano

Electronic tuners
Using a tuning fork

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First Fret

Basic tuning for the electric bass

Tuning forks

Tuning your bass with a tuning fork can be a little tricky at first. With a tuning fork, you are tuning one string, usually the 4th or 3rd, then tuning all of the other strings to that one. If you are tuning the 3rd string, you will be using an A 440 tuning fork, this is the one I prefer. If you want to tune your 4th string, then you are going to use an E 329.63 tuning fork. The numbers stand for the cycles per second, not really important unless you are a physics freak.

How to use it

I am going to show you how to use an A 440 tuning fork, since that is the one that I have.

- Hit one of the sides of the tuning fork on your knee, while holding the stem with your thumb and 1st finger.
- Take the base of the tuning fork and rest it on the bass. Since your bass is wood, it will vibrate at the pitch of the tuning fork. A 440 in this case.
- Play the harmonic at the 5th fret of the 3rd string. You are going to pluck the string with your right hand 2nd finger, while still holding the base of the tuning fork against the guitar. (that is the tricky part)
- Tune that harmonic to match the pitch of the tuning fork. The note you are playing on the bass will sound an octave lower than the tuning fork.
- You will then tune all of the other strings to the 3rd string.

Watch this video on using the tuning fork

RealPlayer Video
(97K)
get realplayer

Page 4, electronic tuners

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Basic electric bass tuning jump zone

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